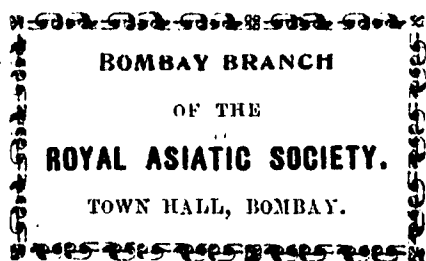




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THE
CHRONICLES OF BUDGEPORE.

THE
CHRONICLES OF BUDGEPORE;

OR,

Sketches of Life in Upper India.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following Sketches, written at various intervals snatched from more serious pursuits, are intended to illustrate some characteristics of social and official life in Upper India, both in European and Native society, and to shew the quaint results which an indiscriminate and often injudicious engrafting of habits and ideas of Western civilization upon Oriental stock is calculated to produce. It may be as well to add, that there are no personal allusions throughout the book. The characters are intended to be representatives of classes, not of individuals. And if, while seeking to amuse, I shall have succeeded in drawing

attention under the disguise of fiction, to serious abuses and defects too patent to all who have studied British India from an impartial and independent point of view, I shall not have cause to regret the time spent upon these pages.

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CHRONICLE I.

A RASH PROMISE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE CHRONICLES OF BUDGEPORE.

CHRONICLE I.

It is not the slightest use for the reader to begin by asking me where Budgepore is, for I have no intention of satisfying a vain and idle curiosity. If it is not in the map that is not my fault, for my profession is not that of a map maker. It is enough for the reader's purpose, and for mine, that he be told that Budgepore is in India. I will further add that Budgepore is a representative place, Budgepore institutions are representative institutions, and Budgepore people representative people. As Budgepore comprises a native city and an English settlement,—a station, as it is called in India,—it

follows that the Budgeporeans consist of native and English people. If the reader thinks the natives have very hard names, that is not my fault, I did not construct Oriental languages, and Oriental appellations always have a hard sound to English ears. And if it is taken as matter of offence that the English people at Budgepore have very queer patronymics, I decline to be answerable for it. If any one is to be blamed, I suppose it is the ancestors and founders of the families whose descendants resided at Budgepore at the time to which these Chronicles refer, and for Christian names I conclude the godfathers and godmothers are responsible. Still there is this to be said for it, that the names, although they do at first seem awkward and uncouth, will generally be understood by those of my readers who have been much in India. And to those who have not, it can make no possible difference whether a man is called Mr. Bywilwuffa or Mr. Billofsale. How it could ever have come to pass that any Englishman should have had such a designation as Mr. Kist Bywilwuffa, the Lieut.-Governor, or Mr. Dakhil Duftar, the Collector and Magistrate, or Dr. Golce, the surgeon, I cannot possibly divine. But as these gentlemen were so called, it is plainly not my business to deprive them of their family appellations or annul the work of their godfathers by calling them Mr.

Smith or Mr. Jones. What would be thought of a footman, who, in announcing Sir Llwyllwgn Mautwrlg, the well-known member for Cgmrwg in North Wales, was, by way of avoiding the difficulty, to call out Mr. David Williams. I shall therefore make no apology for the names of the people who figure in these pages. They would not be the same people under different names; and as they are all old friends of mine, I should be very sorry to see them called by any other.

A good many of the *dramatis personæ* that appear in these Chronicles come and go like the characters upon the stage. Others meet us all throughout the history which, like all true histories, has neither beginning nor end. There is, for instance, Mr. Wasilbakee, a Bengal civilian of high standing, who, as Commissioner of Revenue of the Budgepore division, shares with Mrs. Wasilbakee the dignity and responsibility attaching to the position of the heads of Budgepore society. Next to him in rank, comes Basil Mooltawee, the Judge, and after him, Mr. Dakhil Duftar, the Collector and Magistrate. Dr. Golee is what we call in India the civil surgeon, and there are many others who need not be enumerated here, who will, like all sensible people, come when they are wanted, and not before.

It must not be supposed that, because the

Budgepore people happen to have had rather peculiar names, that they differed from the rest of mankind in any respect. As far as I know, human nature at Budgepore is no otherwise constituted than elsewhere, and it must not be imagined that these Chronicles are recorded for the exclusive benefit of the Anglo-Indian. On the contrary, I think it will be admitted that Budgepore red tape and whitewash much resemble the same articles in London and Paris, at any rate in the method of their application.

It remains to say a few words as to the manner in which the Chronicles came into my possession.

It so happened that in the circle of my dear and old friends who, I may safely say, have made Budgepore society what it is, there was one who had collected a number of characteristic anecdotes with which he would occasionally enliven his companions at our social gatherings. And as he enjoyed great aptitude for studying men and manners, an untiring perseverance in sifting out mysteries, and a most acute sense of the ridiculous, it occurred to me that his stories were too good to be lost, and at my especial request he consented to put them on paper, and to allow me to make what use of them I pleased. A few years before I made his acquaintance, an acquaintance that soon ripened into friendship, Sir Walter Scott's novels had been at the zenith

of their fame, and my old friend had taken such a marvellous fancy to "Old Mortality" that he was always reading and always talking about it. He knew whole passages by heart, and would often repeat them with so much pathos, and such a thorough appreciation of their merits, that he acquired the nickname of Old Mortality. As such he has always been known at Budgepore, and for the last twenty years has gone by no other name.

Some considerable time, however, elapsed after the promise was first made without any show on my friend's part of an intention to fulfil it. Professional business put the matter out of my head, and it was only on my return to Budgepore, after a somewhat prolonged absence, that the idea of collecting these anecdotes through the instrumentality of Old Mortality, as we called him, recurred to me. An accumulation of correspondence, and professional details of various kinds, kept me fully employed for some weeks after my return, during which time I heard and saw nothing of the outside world. I felt the burden the more as it was Christmas, a period when, even at Budgepore, Englishmen snatch a holiday if they can, and, gathering in social circles round their wood fires, endeavour to recal in imagination the scenes of early days, and the familiar, though long lost faces of the old friends of youth and boyhood.

One morning, when busily engaged in my office, I was suddenly accosted by the well-known salutation "A merry Christmas and a happy new year." Raising my eyes from my desk, I beheld my ancient friend. It is curious to observe the air of superiority people assume when they have just returned from Europe. The fact of having been home for ever so short a visit, or of being about to go, confers a kind of rank which I may call Budgepore rank. In possessing this, a subaltern who has just returned from furlough is a personage of much more importance in the drawing room, the ball room, everywhere except on parade, than his captain, who has been in India for the last ten years. A man who has just returned wears the fact in his face, in his coat, in his boots: he lets everyone see that his opinions ought to carry weight. What right have old fogies and old Indians—bah!—who have not been home to rub off the rust in contact with civilization these ten years, to put themselves on a par with him?

So that, when Old Mortality made his appearance with the unmistakable air of a man just out, I scarcely paused to ask him the question whether he had not been to England: I took it for granted, indeed, and only said as we shook hands,—

"You never told me you were going."

"No," said he, seating himself by the fire,

"I hadn't time—and I havn't had time either to go on with those Chronicles, and that is what I have looked in to say."

"So you have been to England?"

"Yes—a flying visit."

"Unexpected, wasn't it?"

"Decidedly."

"And what did you take home?"

"Do you mean that, or do you mean what took me home?"

"Well, yes—either way—I meant what I said."

"I will answer your first question then first. What did I take home? I took home Jimmy and Totty."

"Jimmy and Totty! and what took you home?"

"What took me home? Jimmy and Totty."

"You hadn't much time to spend on the road?"

"No, I hadn't."

"Because I was thinking that perhaps you had been spending a day or two with the Sphinx."

"Ha, Ha! not bad! Well now perhaps you would like to hear a little more about it."

"It?"

"Yes—I mean my trip to England."

"And about Jimmy and Tot—what is it—Tottens?"

"Jimmy and Totty—you appear to experience some difficulty in mastering that name."

"Well, it is rather unfamiliar—probably it is less so to you."

Old Mortality looked at me for an instant out of the corners of his eyes, and answered laconically,

"Probably."

"Now Old Mortality," said I, pointing to the heap of papers on my table that measured exactly two feet six inches in height over the whole area, "you see these papers, recollect your broken promise and don't trifle. You don't deserve to be told it, indeed you don't, but if you knew how many enquiries I have had as to where you were, and when the Chronicles of Budgepore were to appear, you would grow conceited—so I won't tell you, but pray do not take up time needlessly. Let us hear all about your journey and this Johnny—"

"Jimmy, I tell you," he said angrily.

"Well, Jimmy and—the other you know."

"You don't deserve to hear a word—indeed you don't—however, as you are an old friend I'll overlook the extraordinary remissness of your memory and tell you all about it."

"We were dining at Wásilbakee's one night. Pretty nearly all Budgepore was there. Dakhil Duftar was there and his wife, Roobakaree, too, the joint magistrate, and Mrs. Roobakaree,

Mooltawee, the judge, and Mrs. Mooltawee, Dr. Golee, Captain and Mrs. Cameltrunk, Colonel Moodle and his nephew, Kamerband, who, you know, commands the regiment,—were all present. There was Dr. Nindi, the principal of the Budgepore College, Captain and Mrs. Naksha, and a whole host beside, whose names I don't just now recollect. Before dinner was announced, malignant Fate in the person of Mrs. Wasilbakee sailed up and communicated to me in a mysterious whisper her wish, equivalent to a command, that I would take Mrs. Naksha in to dinner. I bowed acquiescence, and shortly after, dinner being announced, I offered Mrs. Naksha my arm and led her in to dinner, our progress thereto only being interrupted twice, by my, and then my partner's, treading on the skirt of the lady in front of us.

“Now there are certain duties allotted to every position in life, and the duty you are called on to perform when dining out is undoubtedly to talk. While your host provides the wherewithal to eat and drink, you are supposed to provide conversation for yourself and your neighbour. Under these circumstances I find that if I think of what to say I never say anything, for if you think what to say your mind inevitably passes on to thinking whether what you are going to say is worth saying, and I need hardly add that the answer is generally

in the negative, so that the process ends in your saying nothing. Whereas, if you don't think what to say your flow of conversation is uninterrupted."

"All which," said I, interrupting him, "is an apology by way of preface for your having said something very stupid."

"If you wish me to go on with my story you must not interrupt me with any superficial observations of that nature. You may keep them for your readers."

"Very well," I replied humiliated—"no more interruptions—I am anxious to hear all about Tommy and the other."

Old Mortality replied by a contemptuous look, and proceeded.

"Mrs. Naksha and I got over the first half of the period allotted to dinner very comfortably. We discussed the usual topics. We mutually remarked that the hot weather was nearly over, and congratulated one another thereon. I observed that the season had been on the whole a very tolerable one, and my companion coincided with me. I hazarded an opinion that we should have a delightful cold season, and Mrs. Naksha endorsed that opinion. We then briefly discussed the various stations we had been located in during our Indian sojourn, and their respective merits. The last ball afforded material for a few more remarks, and we mutually wondered when the next would be.

"We then, *more Indico*, discussed the appearance and dress of every one at the table, and Mrs. Naksha told me everything she had ever heard about the private concerns of each in turn. Finally, the band was disposed of, and then came a pause.

"'I've been thinking,' said I, which was quite false, because I hadn't been thinking at all, 'of taking a run to England and seeing the Paris Exhibition on the way.'

"'Oh, how nice!' exclaimed Mrs. Naksha, 'then I shall ask you to take home Jimmy and Totty.'

"I replied of course that if I carried out my intention it would give me the utmost pleasure to oblige her; not having the least glimmer of an idea of going at all.

"She then informed me that her husband had been ordered to Peshawur. That Jimmy and Totty had arrived at that age when it was absolutely necessary they should go home, that they were extremely anxious to avoid the necessity of taking them all the way to Peshawur, and were looking out for some eligible opportunity to get Jimmy and Totty conveyed home and made over to their friends in England, that there was no one in all India to whom she would rather entrust the responsible charge than to me, and she was quite certain her husband felt the same. To all of which and a

great deal more of the same kind, I replied by common-place polite platitudes, interlarded with asseverations that my plans were by no means fixed, that the idea of going was only a passing thought, which portion of my remarks made, I found, very little impression on Mrs. Naksha's mind. In this way the rest of the dinner passed off very comfortably, and the ladies rose to leave the room.

"When we joined the ladies in the drawing room I went and seated myself by the side of Mrs. Wasilbakee on the sofa.

"How very kind of you!" she said, much to my astonishment, just as I sat down. She had not time to say any more when her husband came up—

"So you are really off, Old Mortality, to the Paris Exhibition? Well done. You are quite right to go. I wish I could go too."

"And so very kind of him," added his wife. "Just think how very nice it is for poor Mrs. Naksha to be able to entrust her little ones to such good hands as Old Mortality's."

"And I know you will be so very kind," added Mrs. Wasilbakee, "as to take home for me a small packet—it is a very small one."

"By the way," said her husband, "yes, that's a good idea. I'll get you to take charge of a small parcel that I have had, I don't know how long, waiting for an opportunity to send it

home. It was Mouza, the Secretary to Government, gave it to me ever so long ago, and asked me to send it to England by the first opportunity that offered, and by Jove I forgot it.'

" 'You go by the steamer of the 23rd I suppose,' said Dr. Nindi, coming up at this juncture to take part in the conversation. 'There's a great friend of mine, Cripps and his wife, charming creature Mrs. Cripps, going by that steamer. You will like Mrs. Cripps very much, clever woman Mrs. Cripps.'

"All this time I sat as one astonished. I could realize a little the feelings of Æneas when he disturbed old Polydore's sleep. You recollect the line,—

"*Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit,*" which we used to translate, "I was thunderstruck, hairs stuck in my throat and my jaws stood erect on the top of my head"—a most curious sensation that—it feebly describes my mental condition at that moment.

" 'Oh yes'—I stammered, 'certainly—very nice—but to tell the truth—well—my plans are not fixed.'

"At that moment up came Naksha, grasped my hand affectionately, and said,

" 'My dear Old Mortality, how can I thank you sufficiently for this great act of kindness. It has relieved us of a world of anxiety. I assure

you there is no man in all India to whom I would rather entrust the sacred charge.'

" 'And they are such clever, sweet children, chimed in Mrs. Wasilbakee, 'so clever and so interesting.'

" I groaned inwardly and thought of Æneas.

" There was a pause. Immediately in front of the sofa where I was seated there was an ottoman on which Mrs. Naksha and some other ladies were sitting. In the short silence that ensued after this last remark, I heard a stifled sob, it proceeded from Mrs. Naksha, who wiped away a pair of small tears with a very small piece of lace and cambric, while her friend, in an audible whisper said to her, by way of consolation,

" 'But just think, my dear, such an excellent opportunity, such a good-natured, noble-hearted man, he will be so kind to them.'

" 'But it is so soon,' murmured Mrs. Naksha. 'I cannot bear to think of it, he leaves by the next mail.'

" 'Here's our old friend Old Mortality going to leave us,' said Wasilbakee to Colonel Moodle, who waddled up and joined the group by the sofa.

" 'Yes,' said Colonel Moodle, who also seemed in league against me, 'I hear he is going to the Paris Exhibition.'

“ ‘To England first, isn’t it so?’ said Mrs. Wasilbakee.

“ ‘Oh yes,’ said I, in my utter bewilderment — ‘certainly.’

“ ‘Business first and pleasure afterwards,’ said Rubakaree from behind. How I hated him!

“ ‘They are such interesting children,’ said Mrs. Wasilbakee. ‘Jimmy’s quite a precocious boy, and as for Totty——’

“The rest of the sentence was cut short by the servant handing round tea and coffee. The group in front of me separated. Mrs. Wasilbakee got up and went to lead Mrs. Rubakaree to the piano. I also arose and moved to another part of the room. Wherever I went it was the same thing over again. One asked me when I started, another wondered I had kept my intended journey so secret, a third envied me my trip, a fourth longed to accompany me, and every lady in the room one after another assured me I should find Jimmy and Totty delightful companions, and they all seemed to think it was very kind of me to take them, and that it was an excellent arrangement for all parties concerned.

“But this was not all. I soon saw another danger looming in front of me. I heard the word—I saw it on the lips of every one—packages.

“ My heart sank, I looked round, there was no escape. Every creature in that room had marked me out for its prey. So have you seen the dying camel stretched upon the sandy plain. The load is taken off his back, for he can no longer carry it, and the kafilā, unable to halt, pushes on, leaving the worn out and feeble to die upon the ground. To halt there would be to sacrifice the lives of the whole caravan for the sake of those, be they men or beasts, upon whom death has already set its seal. But scarcely has the figure of the last camel in the line of the retreating kafilā passed from view behind the next sand heap, when the flapping of wings awakens with a thrill of horror the attention of the dying creature. Instinct tells him of the fate that is in store. First one, then another, then a third, then a host of vultures and carrion birds assembled for the bloody feast, flutter in a cloud above the victim, hover in the air for an instant or two, and then swoop down upon their living prey. That was something like my position. I was as helpless and powerless to escape as that camel. So I set my teeth firmly together, and though still bewildered, yet had sufficient appreciation of my position to know there was no help for it. Once or twice the desperate idea seized me, I would mount upon a chair and make a speech. All Budgepore was there, and all Budgepore

would hear me. I would say, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg you to hear me. You are under a misconception altogether. I am not going to England at all, and what I said to Mrs. Naksha at dinner time was a mere remark *pour passer le temps*, a common-place dinner table observation, of which she had no right to take the advantage she has done.'

"I conned over this little speech in my mind by one of those mental processes which are so rapidly executed in times of emergency. I learnt it by heart. I selected with my eye the best position—the very chair I would stand upon. It was the only hope—the only chance I had. But my heart failed me. Then came the inevitable vultures upon my yet palpitating carcass. I assure you there was not a single lady in that room, not one that did not ask me to take a package—some called it a 'parcel,' some a 'small trifle,' some 'just a tiny little thing.' (I found the tiny little ones the biggest of all)—they all asked me to oblige them so far. A great many of the men, too, did the same, but them I did not hesitate to refuse.

"I reached home that night in a condition of mind more easily imagined than described. How comfortable my room looked—my writing table, my books, all to be abandoned for the discomfort, nay, the horrors, of a P. and O. steamer. I walked up and down the room for

some time in a state bordering on despair. I was minded to do something desperate. Was there no release—no escape? My pistol case was on the table. I opened it and took up my revolver and handled it for a moment fondly. It had been loaded ever since 1858. I recollected that I had been afraid to fire it off lest it should burst, and put it down again with a laugh. Then I called my servant. He came in and put his hands together as if he was going to say his prayers.

“‘Pack up every thing,’ I said, almost in distraction.

“‘He asked me where I was going.

“‘To England,’ I said, grinning horribly in despair.

“‘I had had this man in my service for twenty years. On my saying this, he went away, and abstracted from all my boxes and wardrobes every single thing of every possible kind which he thought I should not miss.

“‘Next morning, the first thing, a note was put into my hands. It was from Naksha, and ran thus:—

“‘My dear Old Mortality.

“‘I cannot express to you how deeply I feel the obligation you are about to confer upon us. No other arrangement could possibly have suited us so well. We know your sterling qualities, and can entrust our charge to you

with confidence, while we feel most grateful to you for undertaking it. I enclose a cheque on the Budgepore bank for Rs. 1000 to meet current expenses. Any thing more you may want, please let me know. We leave for Peshawur this evening. My wife and I will bring the children in the afternoon, and make them over to you. Their things shall be sent over in the course of the day. You have placed me under a lasting obligation to you which I can never sufficiently repay.

“ ‘ Ever yours,

“ ‘ C. NAKSHA.’

“In the course of the morning some coolies appeared with boxes (there were four boxes and seven large bundles, just the kind of things I thought, to be comfortable, loose in one’s cabin), and then clamoured to be paid.

“In the afternoon a carriage drove up. The ayah was on the box. Captain and Mrs. Naksha inside with Jimmy and Totty. Mrs. Naksha’s eyes were red, and traces of recent tears were on her cheeks. Jimmy and Totty were brought up and introduced to me, and so was the ayah, who, I was informed, had undertaken for the sum of one hundred and fifty rupees, half of which had been paid in advance, to accompany the children to England. Mrs. Naksha gave me an inventory of Jimmy and

Totty's things. There were three dozen shirts, three dozen pairs of socks, four pairs of shoes, six pairs of trousers, and six jackets, besides cloaks, &c., a small bag containing a brush and comb, and that instrument of torture, a small-toothed comb, a piece of soap, and sundry bits of flannel, and a sponge. Totty's wardrobe was similarly provided for, but as she was a young lady, I need not specifically detail the articles.

"I will not dwell upon the parting between parents and children. It was sufficiently painful to witness, and it was a relief when it was over.

"After this the little packages began to arrive. I devoted a room for their reception, where they were stowed away as they came, upon the ground. There were in all, by the time I started, one hundred and twenty-seven, weighing in the aggregate, ninety-six pounds, eleven ounces.

"It was obvious that there was nothing left for me but to complete my preparations for the journey. I wrote and engaged berths in the next steamer, and put a bold face on the matter as became a philosopher. My philosophy, however, was sorely tried several times before I made my charge over to the affectionate aunt who was waiting at Southampton to receive

it. First of all, on the morning of departure, the ayah was not to be found anywhere. Having received half the sum stipulated for the journey in advance, she not unnaturally disappeared. When I enquired for her, the other servants said her mother was sick, and thus accounted for her absence. I could not get another to accompany me, and eventually was obliged to put an out-door servant in charge, whose especial calling it is to look after goats, and this being the nearest approximation to a nurse my bachelor household afforded, I enlisted him into the service, and started, I in one carriage, and the two children and their attendant in another. We had not gone far when my carriage, which was in advance, was stopped, and on enquiry I found that Jimmy had fallen out. He fortunately fell into a heap of soft dirt or sand, and was not hurt, so we picked him up, and having enjoined on both the children the necessity of keeping quiet, and upon their attendant the duty of looking better after them, I started again. The children fortunately went to sleep after this *contretemps*, and slept for the rest of the day. We had one night to spend in an hotel, which did not pass very comfortably for me, for Jimmy and Totty having been asleep all day, not unnaturally stayed awake, and insisted on alter-

nately playing, fighting, and crying the whole night. Next day we got to the rail, and so to Calcutta, where I engaged a brawny Scotch-woman, the wife of a soldier quartered in the fort, who consented for the sum of fifty pounds to leave her husband and accompany me to England. After this, my troubles grew less. The steamer sailed the day after I reached Calcutta. Jimmy, Totty and I became pretty good friends before we reached Southampton, where I parted from them, and after spending three weeks in England, I set out on my way back. And here I am, come to report my arrival.

“The trouble which the landing and delivery of the packages entailed, however, is utterly beyond my power of description. The most of the time, it was not very long certainly, that my foot rested on British soil, I was busily engaged in their distribution. A voluminous correspondence had to be conducted, and I narrowly escaped two lawsuits. There was one package directed to some confounded lawyer in some country town. Well, the wretched thing got lost, but the creature had knowledge of it somehow. I suppose the sender had written and told him it was coming. However that may be, I admitted having had it, and said I regretted it was lost or missent. Would you believe it, he wrote back a lawyer’s letter, and

said I was a something or other, I forget what—I dare say you will understand, but I know it ended in double ‘ee,’* and I was bound to use due diligence in taking care of the thing. Of course I had to go to a lawyer, too, to defend the case. His bill for costs alone came to thirty pounds. The action never came off, because a day or two before the time fixed, I received a letter in most indignant and angry terms, from a man of the same name as this lawyer, to whom the parcel had been sent by mistake. The other lawsuit I got into was a nasty business, owing to my having declared the contents of a certain package to be what the sender, it was Mrs. Rubakaree by the way, declared them to be. For some reason or other, my ill luck I suppose, the Custom House officers chose to pounce upon this very one out of the whole lot, and opened it, when the contents turned out to be of a very different character from what Mrs. Rubakaree had intimated, and so their suspicions being aroused they opened some twenty or thirty others, besides getting me fined heavily for a false declaration.

“This is the history of my recent adventure, and now you know what has prevented me from fulfilling my promise. There shall, however,

* “Bailee,” probably.

be no more delay. I'll put my notes together and let you have the first instalment in a couple of days."

My friend was as good as his word, and in two day's time I received what you will find in the next chapter.

CHRONICLE II.

**THE BUDGEPORE MUNICIPAL
COMMISSION**

CHRONICLE II.

THE BUDGEPORE MUNICIPAL COMMISSION.

It pleased the Hon'ble Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, Lieutenant-Governor, to intimate one day to Mr. Wasilbakee, the commissioner of Budgepore, in a "demi-official," his opinion that it would be very desirable that Budgepore should have its municipal commission.

The municipal commission is, as we see it, an institution essentially Indian. It is well known that the British Government is most anxious to educate the people of that country in the art of self-government. There is nothing, and we have been so repeatedly told it that we cannot refuse to believe it, that the old Bengal civilians at the head of the government more ardently desire, than to see as much of the representative principle as possible introduced into the administration of this country. This, the reader will understand, is no new policy; they

have all throughout, I mean for the last century, always held these liberal opinions, and if they have been judged to hold the contrary, it is only a proof of want of judgment among those who have ventured to criticise their acts or to review their policy. The people of India, however, as is well known, have been subjected for many centuries to all the miseries of despotic rule; and it is only of late, that is, since the British power became dominant, that they have been able really to learn what freedom is, and to enjoy its blessings. It is a work of time, however, to render races who have long been subjected to the dominion of arbitrary despots, fit to exercise the privileges of free men. And the present generation of Indian statesmen were the first to introduce the system of municipal commissions or corporations into the larger cities of Upper India, institutions which it was considered would serve in some measure to instruct the people in the art of governing themselves.

While I am writing this chronicle, a bill is passing through the law manufactory at Calcutta, considerably modifying the existing regulations regarding municipal commissions. The reader will understand, therefore, that the Budgepore municipal commission was formed before the present, or the recent bill (as it may

by the time these pages are placed before the public have come into operation) became law.

It will only be necessary to remark, by way of preface, that under the old law the adoption of the system was entirely voluntary, under the new it is compulsory, that is, whenever the Government think fit to introduce it, they can do so.

Well, as I have said; the commissioner received intimation through a demi-official that it would be desirable if the residents of Budgepore would take the first lesson in the art of self-government by the introduction of a municipal commission. Accordingly Mr. Wasilbakee communicated the idea to Mr. Dakhil Duftar, the collector, and Mr. Dakhil Duftar, fully entering into the spirit of the thing, intimated by means of a public notice that there would be a meeting of the principal inhabitants of Budgepore at the cutcherry the following day at 7 A.M. At the same time he sent a circular round the civil station inviting all the European residents to be present on the same occasion.

Great was the wonderment throughout the city of Budgepore as to what the "collector sahib" had summoned the inhabitants for. Various reports prevailed, which became more startling and sensational as the day wore on. Some said the Government had determined

that the principal inhabitants of Budgepore should forthwith be "made Christians," the phrase being "made Christians" conveying different ideas to the minds of different men according to the various shades of feeling with which they regarded the religion of the "sahibs." Others declared that the object of the meeting was the investiture of the Budgeporeans with "khilluts" or dresses of honour for their conspicuous fidelity during the rebellion of 1857. Others averred that they knew on the best authority that there was to be a large sum exacted from them by way of a tax or a forced loan. While the Hindoos were disquieted by a rumour that an ox had been slain the day before at the cutcherry, and they, the Hindoos, were to partake for the first time in their lives of a meal of genuine English roast beef, as abhorrent to them as swine's flesh would be to a Mahomedan.

Towards evening some more authentic information reached the bewildered bazars of Budgepore. Old Gunny Lall, a very stout Hindoo mahajun, or money-lender, of great repute for his wealth, had oiled the palm of the kotwal (or native city subordinate magistrate and police officer), and he had oiled the palm of the collector's serishtadar (or record-keeper as the word literally means, though its practical signification might be more correctly rendered by

the word "factotum,") who for the consideration thus accorded had successfully sounded Mr. Dakhil Duftar's intentions, and through this channel there filtered out an intimation of the real object of the meeting to be assembled on the morrow. Curiosity, however, was by this means but slightly allayed, and of the twenty burghers whom the kotwal had selected as representatives of the mercantile community, but few had much sleep that night.

Duly at the appointed time the assembly met. The European community were represented by the commissioner, Dakhil Duftar, Fitzmisl the Joint Magistrate, Dr. Golee, the Civil Surgeon, Colonel Moodle, Brigadier Haversack, and Fancy Goods, Esq., the Secretary of the All Over India Trading Corporation (late Cork Screw and Co.) Thus you see all classes were fairly represented, the official classes, the military, and the trading community.

The European gentlemen seated themselves on one side of the table, the natives on the other, and Mr. Wasilbakee, as chairman, at the head. On his right, at the right hand corner, sat Dakhil Duftar, next to him Fitzmisl, then Dr. Golee, then the two military officers. On the left, in the seat of honour, was Gunny Lall, next to him Sham Dutt, one of the modern Hindoo school, a sharp fellow who

understood English perfectly, and who was placed there at the especial request of Gunny Lall, in order that he might keep him acquainted with what went on, and act generally as interpreter. Next to him was Motee Lall, then Scrimmage Khan, and so on, I need not enumerate them all. Mr. Wasilbakee opened the proceedings by explaining in English first and then in Hindustani the object of the meeting. He dwelt especially on the voluntary nature of the movement, telling them that he thought the time was come when Budgepore might avail itself of the liberality of the Government, and assume charge of its own municipal institutions. He proposed that those present should enrol themselves into a committee. Their names would be sent up to the Lieutenant-Governor, and in due course of time would be published in the *Gazette*, under a notification that the Budgepore municipal commission had assumed tangible shape and form. The Surgeon and the Brigadier were to be *ex-officio* members, as also of course were the civilians. When duly recognised by Government, the commission would have authority to levy local (or *octroi*) taxes, and to expend the money so collected in local improvements.

The English gentlemen who had discussed it all before had nothing particular to say, the

natives replied "jo hukm" (as ordered), and the meeting dispersed.

By that day's post the following letter went to Head Quarters.

From No. 7351 of 18—
JUMMA WASILBAKEE, Esq., C.S.,
Commissioner of Budgepore,
To
KHAS MOUZA, Esq., C.S.,
Secretary to Govt.,
Budgepore, 1st April, 18—.

SIR,

I have the honour to report for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, that the principal native inhabitants of Budgepore have intimated their desire for the introduction of the municipal system into this city. At a meeting held this day at the collector's cutcherry, a report of the proceedings of which I have the honour to append, the following gentlemen, European and native, declared their readiness to serve on the commission. The movement is entirely a voluntary one, the suggestion having of course come from me, and being readily acquiesced in.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JUMMA WASILBAKEE,
Commissioner.

In due time the notification appeared in the *Gazette*, containing the names of all those who attended the first meeting, and the day following the committee met at the same hour, 7 A.M., at the same place as before.

Proceedings having been opened by the commissioner, who took the chair, the committee took into consideration the question of taxation,—what articles should be taxed.

Dakhil Duftar proposed a tax of one rupee per maund, or two shillings upon every eighty pounds of atta (flour). It was seconded by Fitzmisl, who remarked it was a sound principle of political economy to tax the necessities of life. Fitzmisl was a competition walla, and as such looked down upon by the older civilians. He had come out among one of the first batches of civilians, and entered the service under the new system of competitive examination. He had a decent reputation as a Latin and Greek scholar at Oxford, where he had got a second class in classics at his examination for his degree. His reputation by no means decreased when it followed him to India, and though the old school of civilians affected to look down upon him, criticised unfavourably his seat on horseback, and the cut of his shooting coat, it was clear to me that they were a little afraid of him. He had recently taken much to the study of political economy, and was great in

Adam Smith. It will be seen that the information acquired in that branch of study was not thrown away, but brought to bear upon the points that came in discussion before the Budgepore municipal committee with much advantage to that body.

The next articles that were voted to be taxed were ghee, sugar, rice, and tobacco. No objection was offered to any of these imposts, except that on tobacco, of which several of the native members expressed their disapprobation.

A little rise in the price of such commodities as grain, ghee, sugar, &c., affected them but very slightly, for they were all rich men. Had they asked the thousands of pauper families who thronged the crowded hovels in the bye-ways and lanes of Budgepore, whether the scanty meal doled out daily to their wives and little children could afford diminution without injury to their physical health, they might have been answered in the negative. As a matter of course, however, no one thought of consulting them. But tobacco was a luxury any increase to the price of which touched, though in a very slight degree, the pockets of the rich mahajuns. They saw, however, that the commissioner was not inclined to abandon this tax, so they said "jo hukm."

After this there was a short pause, broken by old Gunny Lall who, acting on the prompting

of Sham Dutt, who was a bit of a wag and enjoyed a joke, proposed a tax of one rupee per dozen upon "beer." At this Dr. Golee smiled, Colonel Moodle tittered, and Fancy Goods, Esq., laughed outright. Mr. Wasilbakee frowned and muttered to Dakhil Duftar something about gentlemanly propriety; and then blandly explained to Gunny Lall that "beer" was already subjected to an import duty, and it would be unfair to put an additional impost upon it.

The natives during this short discussion maintained the most immovable stolidity, but a twinkle in Sham Dutt's eye showed that he had enjoyed the joke.

It was finally resolved that a tax varying in amount should be levied on the following articles,—grain of all sorts, rice, sugar, tobacco, cotton, jute, indigo, salt, ghee, and milk; that fifty policemen should be enrolled who were to be stationed at the different approaches to the city (each of whom levied a tax of his own before the duty was demanded for the municipal commission), and having fixed that they would meet that day six weeks so as to allow a full month whereby to test the success of the operation, the first meeting of the municipal commission of Budgepore separated.

At the appointed time the meeting assembled again. Mr. Wasilbakee as usual in the chair.

Mr. Dakhil Duftar was happy to report a favourable result to the operations of the committee. He had a sum of five thousand rupees at the disposal of the committee for local sanitary improvements.

This announcement being communicated to Gunny Lall by Sham' Dutt, he rubbed his stomach with the flat of his open hand, a sure sign that he was well pleased, and said "Wah! Wah! (bravo!)" and after a whisper from his mentor, asked,—

"Hum logon ka hissa kitna howega?" (How much will our share be).

There was a slight titter among the natives at this. Fancy Goods, Esq., again disgraced himself by laughing outright. Even Fitzmisl smiled. Dakhil Duftar threw himself back in his chair, and Mr. Wasilbakee looked stern.

"Yih rupeea am ke rupiya hain," said the Commissioner, rebuking the avarice of Gunny Lall. What he meant to convey was, "This money is public money."

"Am!"* quoth Gunny Lall, again rubbing his stomach, "Wah! Wah! kitne bahoot am milenge." (Mangoes! what a quantity of mangoes we shall get!)

Again there was a titter. Mr. Wasilbakee

* There are two words pronounced by Europeans in the same way. One "am," meaning "public," in the sense of for instance, *deewan-i-am*, a public hall of audience, and "am," a mangoe.

did not condescend to any further explanation, but asked if any member of the committee had anything to propose.

Dr. Golee remarked, that during the past month, owing as he supposed to an unusual consumption of vegetables, there had been a great increase of diarrhœa in the city, and he suggested a duty upon vegetables.

Fancy Goods, Esq., suggested that perhaps the natives consumed more vegetables in consequence of the higher price of more wholesome articles of food.

Mr. Wasilbakcé thought this was an unreasonable conclusion, for he had been careful to make enquiries through his serishtadar, who reported to him that the poorer classes were well satisfied with the tax, and that it in no way acted as a prohibitory tax upon necessary articles of food.

Dakhil Duftar confirmed that report. His serishtadar had told him the same.

Fancy Goods, Esq., looked incredulous. The commissioner observed, that it was with the view of determining questions of this sort that the native gentlemen present were associated with them as members of the committee. He then, addressing them in Hindustani, asked the native members if they were of opinion that the tax upon the more wholesome articles of food had had any effect on the consumption of vegetables.

To this the native members replied "jo hukm," or as ordered. The commissioner, however, not being quite satisfied with that answer, proceeded to explain to them that there was a difference of opinion among the "sahibs," some of them supposing that the tax upon grain had been followed by a larger consumption of vegetables and other unwholesome articles of diet, and others being under the impression that the increased consumption of vegetables was not to be attributed to that cause. He added that he himself held the latter view, whereupon the native members unanimously remarked,

"Ap ki rai buhoot daroost." (Your honour's opinion is correct).

A tax was accordingly voted upon vegetables. •

The next question proposed was "what should be done with the money," and here a great difference of opinion prevailed. One was for making a new road from the station to the city. The Brigadier thought it might be profitably expended in placing copings to the walls in cantonments. Colonel Moodle suggested that it should be expended in filling up rat-holes on the parade ground. Fitzmisl proposed gilded cupolas to the Court-house. Dakhil Duftar an open drain through the principal streets of the city. Dr. Golee thought a new

dispensary should be built, and Fancy Goods, Esq., suggested that the money should be given back again. The native members being asked what they proposed to do with it, unanimously replied "jo hukm." At last Mr. Wasilbakee proposed to level and plant out with young trees a vacant space of ground at that time waste and untidy in front of Dakhil Duftar's house, and right in the heart of the station. The native members unanimously endorsed the commissioner's suggestion, and it was accordingly carried, without there being any necessity of referring it to the European members. Old Gunny Lall, who was deaf, did not hear what had been determined on, and asked Sham Dutt how the money was to be employed.

"Collector Sahib ke waste ek bagheecha bunega," (a garden is to be made for the Collector) was the reply.

"Wah ! wah !" replied Gunny Lall, rubbing his stomach.

Fitzmisl having been appointed Honorary Secretary, and Sham Dutt Assistant Secretary, upon a salary of 200 rupees a month, the meeting broke up.

When they met again the following month, the secretary had favourable results to report. The improvements on the waste ground in

front of Dakhil Duftar's house had been proceeded with, and most of the collections from the octroi for the first month expended on them. There was of course a surplus in hand, the fruits of the second month's octroi, and without wearying my readers with a repetition of details, I may as well state that after the usual discussion, it was determined to carry out Dakhil Duftar's suggestion and make a drain through the principal street of the city. The only difference between the resolution as first put, and as carried, being that it was determined to have a covered drain some way below the surface instead of an open one.

Mr. Fileeter, the deputy collector, who was supposed to be a good (amateur) engineer, was requested to look after the construction of this useful public work.

The drain was completed about the time the rainy season set in, but there being no natural drainage, and no river to carry off the sewage, Mr. Fileeter's engineering operations resulted in the accumulation of an immense mass of filth in the shape of a morass just outside the city. About this time the cholera broke out rather severely, and Dr. Golee was glad to avail himself of the funds in the hands of the municipal commissioners to enlarge his hospital and dispensary. The most diligent efforts

were made to restrain the ravages of the epidemic. Medicines were distributed *gratis*, and Dr. Golée wrote a report of thirteen sheets of foolscap, showing how the cholera would have been much worse if it had not been for the trees that had been planted opposite Dakhil Duftar's house, while Dr. Baragolee, the Inspector-General, who visited Budgepore about that time, wrote another report of twenty-six sheets of foolscap, showing how the cholera was owing to the large quantity of trees in and about the place, which developed malaria. These reports, in spite of their slightly contradictory tendency, were published in the *Government Gazette*, with a minute by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

While these great and wise men were engaged in the investigation of the causes of the epidemic, my attention was directed to the same subject by a remark from a very humble individual, that is to say, my syce. As I was walking my horse leisurely along the road one evening returning to my solitary home (ah! why was it I missed that star from heaven that crossed my path and left me with seared heart a bachelor for ever!) being in a conversational mood, I, as was my wont on such occasions, addressed myself to the only available companion, my syce, and endeavoured to draw

forth by leading questions and remarks his opinions upon men, manners, and the times. It so happened that I pitched upon the subject of the recent visitation, and made some suggestions as to the probable cause of it, when the man said,

“When ‘Taccus’ came” (a tax as the personification of the evil principle, or evil demon) — “when Taccus first came the poor people left off eating grain and ate vegetables, and when Taccus came to vegetables they had not enough food to fill their stomachs, and when Taccus came to the water, the water became bad, and so all the poor people got sick and died.”

This, literally translated, is what he said to me, and I pondered over his words, for there seemed to be some truth hidden underneath them.

I must here explain to my English reader that he must not from the use of the word “vegetables” get the idea of green peas and potatoes. No, the vegetables that the poor of Budgepore had to resort to when their more wholesome articles of food were taxed, were “kaddoos,” or gourds, huge masses of pulpy vegetable matter like—well, I don’t know what they are like. There is little or no nourishment in them. But in some parts of the country they are very cheap and grow to an enormous size. I was once told of one so large

that a missionary and his family lived on it for a week. To which I replied that I had seen one so large that a missionary and his family might have lived *in* it—and so they might, for missionaries are always very small in stature, and their families, though large in number, generally small in size. The gourd I speak of was an immense one. I saw it at Dr. Honigberger's house at Srinuggur, in Cashmere.

I could not at first understand what my syce meant by "Taccus" coming to the water. But at last I discovered. I got some of the water from all the wells in the city and analysed it, and found unmistakable signs of the presence of sewage. I then made some pertinent enquiries of Fileeter as to the course of his famous drains, and the conclusion was inevitable that they had been constructed so as to allow the sewage to percolate into the city wells. This, combined with the decrease of food, and the consumption of innutritious diet, was quite enough in my mind to account for the cholera. So I wrote a letter to the *Mofussilite*, and the editor took up the subject and wrote an article upon it. A pretty stiff one too. The result of that was the following correspondence.

“ Official. . No. 10567.

“ *August, 18—.*

“ From

“ KHAS MOUZA, ESQ., C.S.,

“ *Secretary to Government,*

“ To

“ DR. GOLEE,

“ *Civil Surgeon, Budgepore.*

“ SIR,

“ I have been directed by his honour the Lieutenant-Governor, to draw your attention to an article and a letter in the *Mofussilite* newspaper of the 21st July, 18—, wherein it is stated that the recent epidemic at Budgepore is traceable to the pollution of the water by the construction of drains under the order of the municipal commission. His Honour desires that the matter may receive the fullest elucidation, and with this view I have the honour under instruction to solicit the favour of your making an analytical examination of the water from the wells in the city, and communicating the result in a report.

“ I have, &c.,

(Sd.) “ KHAS MOUZA,

“ *Secretary to Government.*”

By the same post came the following demi-official.

"MY DEAR DR. GOLEE,

"You will receive an official communication from me by this day's dawn respecting the statement in the *Mofussilite* newspaper, that the wells of Budgepore have been poisoned by ill-constructed drainage. H. H. is quite convinced that there can be no foundation for this report, which has no doubt been circulated with the view of throwing discredit upon the operations of the municipal commission. H. H. will be glad to hear that his surmises are correct, and has little doubt that a scientific analysis of the water will lead to this result.

H. H. bids me say he is much pleased with the exertions made at Budgepore to extend medical aid to the inhabitants of the city, and as the duties of the enlarged dispensary and hospital must entail considerable extra labour, he is prepared to sanction an allowance of rupees 100 a month for these duties upon application.

"Yours very truly,

"KHAS MOUZA."

Golee, who did not of course know that I was the author of the letter in the *Mofussilite*, was busy analyzing the water one morning when I called at his house at chota hazree (which means a sociable cup of tea and bit of toast in the early morning), and told him all

about it. I remained there and witnessed the whole operation. Dr. Golee analyzed for mineral salts, and found no sewage. The result was communicated in a very able report to Government, which was shortly after produced along with the article from the *Mofussilite* in the *Gazette*, triumphantly proving the unreliable nature of so unwarrantable a publication.

The Budgepore municipal commission has now been in existence some years. It has been a remarkable success. The military and civil station no longer present the ruinous appearance they formerly had. Ornamental white-washed walls, which require renewal every year, have been erected along all the roads. The roads themselves have been improved. The waste ground opposite Dakhil Duftar's house has been transformed into a pretty garden, where the band plays once a week. The principal roads in the civil station and the cantonment, are kept well watered; the city kotwal has built a new and rather a stylish house for himself in the Chowk or principal market-place, and Sham Dutt, the Assistant Secretary, has set up a carriage and pair, the most showy turn-out in the whole place.

There is, it is true, another side to this picture. About 20,000 of the inhabitants of the city have emigrated to other places. The

epidemic which has visited Budgepore regularly every year since the municipal commission was established, although of course the coincidence in point of time between the commencement of the one and the first visitation of the other, is only accidental, finding the poorer classes of the population with their physical strength below par from want of the necessary amount of nutritious diet, and their frequent use of vegetables as a staple article of food, has yearly swept away several thousands, chiefly women and children. The growers of country produce, cotton, et cetera, finding that they had to pay a tax if they carried their produce to the city, took it elsewhere to other spots equally favourable for transport to the coast, and the bunneas and purchasers generally, having also their own interests to consult in evading the tax, established agencies at these spots to co-operate with the producers, and thus trade has fallen off immensely. The houses in the bazaar are fast falling into disrepair, and many ruinous, and the whole aspect of this once flourishing city is one that speaks of poverty and want. Fitzmisl, however, still proves that the municipal commissioners have been acting on the truest principles of political economy, of which science he considers himself a master. The commissioner makes diligent enquiries through his serishtadar every month as to the

condition of the people, and is assured that they are delighted with the municipal commission, and quite proud of exercising so large a share in the administration. The causes of the decline of trade and general deterioration of the once prosperous city, he is assured by the same authority is owing to the fact of three or four Europeans having become landholders in the district, and to nothing else, and Mr. Wasilbakee thoroughly endorses these views, which appear to His Honour most correct. So the one side of the picture is shown to the public in reports, blue books, minutes, proceedings, and selections, while on the other no one cares to look.

CHRONICLE III.

THE BUDGEPORE EXHIBITION.

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CHAPTER I.

SHOWING HOW THE SKILLED ARTIZAN WAS INTRODUCED TO THE COLLECTOR.

"WE are to have a Budgepore exhibition, Old Mortality, what do you think of that?" said Mrs. Dakhil Duftar to me one evening at their house after dinner.

"Yes," said I, "I am sorry to hear it."

"Sorry to hear it?" said Mr. Wasilbakee, coming up at the moment, "and why, pray—do you not think these exhibitions are great things for developing the resources of the country, giving a stimulus to trade, aiding arts and manufactures, and benefiting the artisans as well as the agricultural population?"

"No, indeed, I don't," I replied. "The

principal thing they serve to devlope is the rapacity of the amla and police, and the utter incompetence of their European superiors to control it. The chief thing exhibitions give a stimulus to are corruption and bribery; what they most aid in is generating ill will, and bad feeling, and neither the artizan nor the agriculturist is one whit the better for them. The country is not prepared for them. They are in advance of the times, and worse than useless for all practical purposes."

"Ah, you are a mass of prejudice—wait till you see the exhibition! But, come, let us argue the point,—how on earth can an exhibition do any of the things you say. What room is there for bribery and corruption? The collector of a district calls for the best artizan in the particular branch of industry for which his locality is famed. Say, he is a carpenter; well, the collector sahib encourages him to produce the very best article he can possibly turn out of his workshop. He does so, gets a prize perhaps, and is a famous man for the rest of his life. He is proud of his prize medal, and hands it down as an heirloom to his children to serve as a stimulus and incentive to them to industry and perseverance."

"All very fine, my dear sir, not so fast. We have not got beyond the first stage yet. How many people, think you, will your prize car-

penter have to pay before he reaches the collector sahib's presence?"

"Pay! if the fellow is such a fool as to pay money to any one that asks him, he must do so. We can't protect people who won't help themselves."

"Suppose he is forced to pay the money."

"I say he can't be forced—he can refuse."

"And I say he daren't refuse. If he does, woe betide him. He is a doomed man from that day forth, he will end his days in jail, happy if not tortured to death."

"Tortured to death—pooh! what nonsense you do talk. I do believe you think every official in India a wild beast that delights in torturing his fellow creatures."

"I don't think you delight in torturing your fellow creatures, but I think you are just as guilty as if you did, for you allow others to do so. You would, perhaps, be less to blame if you did delight in it, for then Nature would be at fault for having given you a moral organization with blunted perceptions of right and wrong and no feeling. As it is, you deliberately blind yourself to what goes on, partly from deep-rooted prejudice and partly from indolence."

Mr. Wasilbakee and I had many such little encounters as this, and as we both understood each other, they were followed by no bad

feeling or ill will on either side. But whether he or I was right in our estimate of the probable results of the exhibition will be apparent from the following chronicle. Curiously enough, the very illustration he had used in argument served practically to demonstrate the truth of what I averred. I am not certain that it did not act as a suggestion.

It very soon became known that Mr. Byewilwuffa, the Lieut.-Governor, looked upon the Budgepore exhibition as a pet scheme. The *éclat*, it was thought, might serve to impart a little glitter and fictitious lustre to an administration otherwise weak and profitless. And all the Budgepore civilians, covenanted and uncovenanted, very soon began to see that their best chance of favour and promotion at headquarters depended on the zeal and activity they displayed in pushing forward this pet scheme. The result was, that they all more or less neglected their legitimate duties and spent their time in looking about for curiosities, or hunting up some species of country produce hitherto unheard of, or getting artisans who were recommended to them as peculiarly skilful by one of their own amla, their clerks, or moon-shees, or orderlies, and setting them to work in their compounds and verandahs, making thermantidotes that wouldn't work except in models, punkahs that require a horse instead

of a man to pull them, draw-wells that operated effectually with a tumbler of water on the drawing-room table, carts that combined the disadvantages of the country hackery with those of the English waggon, &c., &c. Others purchased expensive horses with a view to getting the prize at the exhibition, or bought gigantic bullocks for the same purpose. Mooltawee, the judge of Budgepore, excited great envy by displaying a buffalo with five legs which he had picked up somewhere in the district, and which every one felt sure would carry off the prize in that department. Others took to breeding fancy pigeons, fattening ducks, geese, and turkeys. Mulligatawny, a young competition-walla, who had been a year in the country, one day saw a pony in the district with red legs and a green tail, and immediately purchased it at treble its value as a specimen of a new breed. Nor did the fever of emulation cease with the European officials. All the native subordinate officers, the tehsildars and thanadars, not to mention mookuddums, putwaries, kanoongoes, and chowkedars, who imbibed but a crude and imperfect notion of the objects of the exhibition, viz. that there was a hukm of the sirkar, or order of the Government, to collect everything that was "ajaib," or curious in the whole range of mineral, vegetable, and animal economy, left their

stations and their duties and went over the whole country searching for anything in the shape of a vegetable or animal monstrosity they could find. In every native collector's compound that you entered almost you would be sure to see some extraordinary freaks of nature in the shape of some misshapen calves, buffaloes, bullocks, or camels, waiting to be taken to the great "tamasha ghur," or exhibition. A policeman who hunted up a deformed child with no legs and without arms, was as sure of favour as if he had caught a thief. The artisans who were unlucky enough to be pitched upon as "skilled," had to abandon their work which brought them in their daily bread and spend their time in manufacturing, without remuneration, trinkets and knickknacks of all possible and impossible sorts, that could under no circumstances be of the least use to a living creature.

Meantime a spot had been selected in the vicinity of Budgepore for the exhibition building. The place was marked out and building operations commenced under the supervision of Dakhil Duftar, assisted by Fitzmisl. An inspector of police, with fifty men under him, was told off for the duty of collecting workmen, looking after their daily labour, and paying them. The way they managed it was this. There were six villages in the immediate

neighbourhood of the site chosen. These villages contained a population each of from 150 to 200, men, women, and children included. The whole population of one of these villages was called out in turn one day in the week to assist in the erection of the building, the masonry work of course being performed by raj mistrees or masons from Budgepore, the coolies being employed in carrying bricks, mortar, earth, beams of wood, &c. Dakhil Duftar would come down in the morning and see a number of coolies at work, praise the inspector for his ability in collecting so many, and would be told of course that they all came voluntarily and of their own accord. In the evening they were all seated in a line on the ground when Dakhil Duftar and Fitzmisl happened to be on the premises (when they were not, the form was dispensed with) and the allotted number of copper coin paid ostentatiously into the hand of each man, woman, or child for the day's labour, the inspector diligently recording in a note-book every rupee thus expended. Dakhil Duftar of course could not be expected to follow these coolies to their homes. Had he done so, he might have seen that as they were all marched in a line out of the grounds, as soon as they turned the corner and entered a lane lined with thick cactus hedges, they had to pass between four

policemen, two on each side of the lane, who took from each individual every coin that had been paid. As was natural, of course, petitions were sent to Dakhil Duftar complaining of all this. Many of these were anonymous and received no notice; but one from Zalim Sing, a zemindar of one of the villages, complaining that his people were forcibly taken away one day in the week and received no pay, did receive attention. Zalim Sing was summoned to the cutchery, whither he went in a very uncomfortable frame of mind, having been warned all the way from his village to the cutcherry by the policeman who served the summons, that he and his would rue the day he had ventured to complain to the "sahib." Arrived at the cutcherry the district superintendent of the police no sooner saw Zalim Sing than he told the magistrate that he was a noted character, and that his name would be found in the list of badmashes (bad characters). The book was sent for, and sure enough there was Zalim Sing's name just as the district superintendent had said: and not only that, but the whole village had a mark against it, as being a place altogether of bad repute. So Zalim Sing was dismissed, his word not being deemed worthy of credit, and on the representation of the district superintendent, a party of ten constables and an inspector were ordered to be quartered

in the village for the next six months at the expense of the inhabitants.

After this there were no more complaints of non-payment. But nevertheless the work progressed so slowly that Dakhil Duftar was seriously afraid it would not be ready in time. As it is, he and Fitzmisl had been obliged to leave all their regular work to get into arrears. The number of prisoners in the hawallat (or lock-up where prisoners whose cases have not been decided are kept confined) had increased to fifty-eight, many of whom had been in close confinement now for two months without any trial, which was strictly against the law, but who was there to see that the law was enforced? While the miscellaneous cases on the files of the collector and his subordinate had assumed formidable dimensions. So Dakhil Duftar determined to complete the work by contract, and made an agreement with a European named Bolt, who was what is vulgarly called "knocking about" the station at that time picking up whatever work he could. Bolt went over the building with Dakhil Duftar, and examined the walls and masonry work with the eye of an experienced builder, talking very learnedly all the time and using a great many technical terms, which much impressed Dakhil Duftar. After a day spent in examining the plans, Bolt declared his

readiness to undertake the contract on certain terms. An agreement was drawn out on stamped paper and duly signed, and an advance of three thousand rupees made from the treasury. After this, Bolt mysteriously disappeared, and has never, that I know of, been heard of since. It is generally supposed that he fell into a well on his way home, or perhaps was waylaid and murdered for the sake of the three thousand rupees which he carried away from the treasury in a bag himself.

Dakhil Duftar was now sorely beset. He began to think he had better have employed the Public Works Department. Time was pressing, and what if the building should not be ready! Mooltawee felt certain there would be no exhibition at all that year, and as it was extremely doubtful if his buffalo with five legs would live for another year, he used to assemble as many of his friends as he could at his house in the morning and have the buffalo brought out for a private exhibition of his own. * .

At this time the Budgepore railway was in progress, the history of which I hope I shall live to chronicle hereafter, and among the engineers engaged in its construction was one Sleeper, a great friend of Dakhil Duftar's. And Sleeper came to the rescue, and having obtained permission from the railway superintending engineer to take up this work, he

consented to complete the building within the prescribed time. As a railway engineer, however, he could not, of course, be expected to construct an edifice, the foundations whereof had been laid by another, and he not a professional man. So the walls had to be pulled down and the foundations laid afresh, with many alterations and improvements in the original design. Of course all this cost money, but money was forthcoming, for the Hon'ble Kist Byewilwuffa looked with favour on the scheme, and the contract was given to Sleeper for twenty thousand rupees. The material was all at hand, and Sleeper had the services *gratis* of the assistants, and overseers, and bricklayers on the railway, which unimportant work was allowed to stand over for the present, the Government consulting engineer having given it as his opinion that a few weeks' delay would not be detrimental, on the other hand it would be highly beneficial, as affording time for the earthwork to consolidate and the brickwork and masonry to harden.

A long time before matters had progressed thus far, I heard that Dakhil Duftar had given notice that all the most skilful artizans of Budgepore were to be registered, and were to be sent to the kotwallee with specimens of their handiwork before being introduced to him.

Being inclined to experimentalise a little upon the ways and means of developing genius through official channels, I summoned a trusty domestic of my own, in whose wits I had full confidence, to my counsels. I had several little knick-knacks which I had purchased in Paris a few years back. They were not of Paris manufacture, but Swiss. They consisted of very prettily carved boxes, spoons, forks, paper-knives, trays, dice-boxes, and so on. These I produced and a bag of rupees which I had taken the precaution to mark (each one separately).

"Now," said I, to my faithful domestic Selim, "you are to go and get introduced to the collector sahib as one of the skilled artizans of Budgepore, to compete for the prize at the approaching exhibition."

"But," said the astonished Selim, who evidently thought for a moment I was demented, "I am no artizan. Why should I go?"

"I know you are no artizan, Selim, but you will go all the same. Every man who wishes to be presented to the collector sahib to compete for the prizes, is to go to-morrow morning to the kotwallee and enter his name. That is all you will have to do, enter your name; do you understand? The kotwal will tell you what next to do. Take these things with you,

and if you are asked what you can make, show these. I'll be bound to say no one in Budgepore will produce better. You may want a rupee or two, but don't give away more than you can help, and keep an exact account of how you spend it—give no more than you are forced to do. But recollect you are to have your name registered. There are fifty rupees in this bag, and a bank note for fifty more. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sahib, I understand."

"Well, go."

Next morning early Selim departed. He did not return till late in the evening.

"Hallo!" I said, pretending to be very angry, "where have you been all day, Sir?"

"I have been to get my name registered," said the man, rather sulkily.

"Well, that only occupied five minutes, I suppose, a walk to the kotwallee and back. What have you been doing all day?"

"If the sahib won't be angry with his slave, his slave will tell him what a net of misfortunes his slave has been enveloped in, owing to his obedience to his master's orders."

"Go on, tell me all about it."

"I went to the kotwallee at sunrise this morning and told the chiprassee what I was come for: and he told me to wait. There were a number of others there waiting, too. We sat

till ten o'clock, when I saw one of the men put a coin into the chiprassee's hand, and he was taken inside. After a time another did the same, and then a third, but when the fourth went up to follow the rest, I saw the chiprassee refused to take the coin; it was one rupee and he made him pay two. This went on for a long while; at last I got tired of waiting, and went up like the rest.

“‘I want to go and have my name registered, Sir,’ said I, ‘please may I go in?’

“The man held out his hand, and I slipped a rupee into it.

“‘No, no, my friend,’ said he, ‘I’ve been watching you all day, you are a fine fellow with a bran new turban and such shoes! I must have five from you.’

“‘Very well,’ I said, and gave him the five rupees. I was then admitted into a room where I found almost all my former companions who had got in before me seated on the floor with their backs against the wall. I entered into conversation with one by whose side I happened to seat myself, and asked him how long he had been there. ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘I saw you outside this morning, and so you have only just got in. Well, we have to wait here till our turn comes. But I see several have gone in out of their turn by paying the chiprassee at the door something.’

“ ‘How much have you to pay this one?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, I don’t know: I see some giving two, some three, some five rupees, and I wish I had the money to give, and I would willingly give it to get away. I have been here all the morning and my stomach is quite empty, and my wife is sick. I did not want to come here at all, but I was told by one of the kotwal’s men that if I didn’t I should be turned out of my house and have to get another, and as I am in arrears for my rent three months, this would ruin me.’ ”

“ ‘Well,’ said I, ‘I think I’ll try. I have some money and may as well spend it in this way, now I have come here, but, like you, I wish I had stayed away.’ ”

“ ‘So I went up to the chiprassee at the door and asked if I might go in to have my name registered.’ ”

“ ‘Wait till your turn comes, my friend,’ he replied quite civilly.

“ ‘But I am in a great hurry, Sir, and should really esteem it a great favour if you would allow me to go in.’ ”

“ ‘I think you have a bag of money there,’ he said, eyeing the purse.

“ ‘Yes, and I’ll willingly give you five rupees to let me go in at once.’ ”

“ ‘That cannot be, but I’ll let you go in fifth.’ ”

“ ‘Take ten,’ said I, pressing the money upon him, ‘and let me go at once.’ So he took the money and let me in.

“When I got inside, I found the kotwal seated there on one side and a man whom I afterwards found out was the collector sahib’s serishtadar, on the other side. They looked at one another as I entered, and then went on with their writing. I made a very low salam to each, and, folding my hands, addressed the kotwal.

“ ‘May it please your majesty, this poor slave has come to register his name as a skilled artizan to compete for the prize in the exhibition.’

“The kotwal beckoned me towards him with a look of much majesty, and asked me to show him what I could make. I produced the paper-knife and other things and gave them to him.

“ ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘these are very pretty, and did you make all these?’

“ ‘Every one.’

“ ‘And what are they worth?’

“I told him a price, five rupees, ten, and so on, just as it came into my head at the moment, for indeed I had never thought what they were worth, nor did I expect to be asked.

“ ‘Very well,’ said the kotwal, putting the things down beside him with the evident inten-

tion of keeping them, 'I'll keep these trumpery knick-knacks, they will serve as your nuzzur; go to the serishtadar sahib and tell him you wish your name registered.'

"So I went to the serishtadar, and said very humbly, 'May it please your exalted highness, I have come a poor carpenter to have my name registered as a skilled artizan to compete for the prize at the exhibition.'

"'There are already too many names down on my list,' said he.

"'This will be a sad disappointment,' I replied. 'That I am skilful at such things the kotwal sahib knows; as he has done your poor slave the honour to accept a few trifling articles of my handiwork. If your majesty would be pleased to look at these things for a moment, your highness will see that I am not an impostor, and that I can really make very pretty things.'

"'Very likely, but for all that my list is so full I cannot possibly add any more,' and he went on writing.

"Fully understanding what was meant, I had resort to my bag of rupees, now pretty well diminished, and, taking out ten, offered them to the great man. He pushed away my hand, and looking sternly at me, asked me if I took him for a common chiprassee that he received bribes of ten rupees.

“ ‘Go away, go away, you son of a dog,’ he added, ‘and don’t interrupt me any more.’ ”

“ At this I fell on my knees, and with uplifted hands prayed to be forgiven : and then getting out my fifty rupee note, I offered it to him very humbly, begging him to accept it as a nuzzur from his poor slave.

“ This had the desired effect. He took the note, looked at the amount, held it up and examined it before the light, and then put it down on his desk.

“ ‘Very well,’ he said, ‘that will do. What is your name?’ ”

“ Now, to this moment, I had never thought what name I should go by : it had never occurred to me that I should be asked, although, of course, if I had thought about it I must have been well aware that as I went to get my name registered, I should be certainly required to state what it was. I stammered over the question till the serishtadar got angry, and said ‘Well, fool, what is your name?’ ”

“ ‘Pir Khan,’ I said, at last recovering myself.

“ ‘Go,’ said he, ‘and be at the collector sahib’s house to-morrow at ten o’clock, and don’t look quite as much like a fool there as you do here.’ ”

“ On this I made a very low salam, and came out. In the outer room there was many

an envious eye turned upon me, as I passed out, from those who were still squatting there, like hens hatching eggs. I exchanged a few words with the man with whom I had sympathised before.

“‘I don’t think I shall wait here any longer,’ he said.

“‘Much better not,’ I replied. ‘It is better to spend your money in paying your arrears of rent, or in moving house, than giving it away here: and ten to one, after all, if it will be of any service.’ So I came away.”

“And that is all the money you have brought back?”

“Yes, sahib, this is all,” he said, counting out what remained, which was thirty-five rupees.

“Keep that,” I said, “you will probably want it to-morrow when you go to the collector sahib.”

“Am I to go to the collector sahib?” he asked in much surprise.

“Yes, of course you are, didn’t you go to-day and get your name written down on purpose that you should go to the collector sahib; why should I waste all that money for nothing?”

Selim went away on this, and told all the rest of the servants that the sahib was gone mad, and the consequence was, my servant, when he brought me my dinner, eyed me

askance, and trembled violently when he handed me the dishes and changed my plate.

Next day Selim went off at ten o'clock to the collector's house, and returned about one.

"Well," said I, "how have you sped—have you seen the collector sahib? Let us hear all about it."

"When I got to the collector sahib's house this morning, I stood outside the door with seven or eight other men who were waiting there on one business or another. As no one took any notice of me I pushed my way to the front. 'Hulloo, fellow, who are you and what do you want?' said a chiprassee. 'Please, sir,' said I, 'I am a poor carpenter. I have had my name registered to compete for the prize at the exhibition, and I was ordered to come here to-day for the "huzoor" to see me.' 'Well, you had better wait there, and the sahib will perhaps see you when he comes out to go to cutcherry; meantime, keep a little further off, and don't come crowding in close to the door.' 'If you please, sir,' I said, 'I am pressed for time, and my wife is very sick, and there is no one to give her food or medicine; if you would be so kind as to let me go in and have my business over, I shall be very much obliged.' Saying this, I slipped a rupee into the fellow's hand. 'Wait a minute,' he said, 'I'll see if I can manage it for you.'

"Saying this, he went away, and returned shortly after with another chiprassee. 'Here,' he said, 'this gentleman will take you inside, it is not every day such fellows as you get admittance to the "huzoor," but these are queer times, and we must obey orders.'

"The second chiprassee then took me rather kindly by the hand, and said 'Come with me, my good fellow, I will see whether I can manage it for you. Come this way, the sahib is very busy this morning, and it will be difficult. But I'll do my best.'

"We had arrived by this time in a kind of outer or verandah room, where there was no furniture, but a tailor was sitting down sewing some embroidered work on the edge of a lady's petticoat. There were also a chemise and some other articles of ladies' apparel lying before him, which I suppose he had been mending. I waited there patiently by the tailor's side for at least half an hour, till my patience was exhausted, and I ventured to ask the tailor if he thought the chiprassee would come again.

"'I don't think it is at all likely he will come again unless he is called. You gave him nothing—don't you know the dustoor (custom). Did you never hear the proverb, 'the path through the rich man's gate is paved with silver.'

“ ‘ Perhaps you will be so kind as to go and look for him,’ said I, offering him a rupee.

“ ‘ Very well, I see you are a good fellow at the bottom, only rather stupid at first—wait here, and if any one calls me, say you are gone to fetch me, and that I went away to drink water.

“ So he went inside, leaving me with the petticoat and the other things, and I could not help admiring them, they were so fine and pretty.

“ ‘ By and by he came back again, and said, ‘ Unfortunately, the chiprassee who brought you in was sent away on an errand, and I don’t know how long he may be gone. But I have spoken to the jemadar himself for you, who promised to come as soon as he possibly could. Sit down by me, he will be here directly.’

“ So I sat down. By and by the jemadar came. He was a very tall, dignified looking person, dressed in blue cloth and a silver brocade belt round his waist. ‘ Dear me,’ I said to myself, ‘ so grand a person as this! I shall be ashamed to offer him a rupee—I must offer him more.’

“ ‘ Where is the man you spoke to me about, Kaleefa?’ said the jemadar. ‘ The sahib is disengaged just at this moment. Now is a favourable time—if we lose this opportunity I fear he will be kept waiting all day.’

“ ‘Oh, thank you, Sir,’ said I, jumping to my feet, ‘I am so much obliged to you.’ ”

“ With this I followed my conductor inside, and found myself in a sort of hall, which had three or four doors opening into it. One of them was half open and I caught a glimpse of my friend the serishtadar sitting at a table. My conductor pointed to the door as much as to say, that is the room where the ‘huzoor’ is—and held out his hand to me—open. I counted into it, one after another, slowly, ten rupees. He did not move till I had completed the whole ten: but I gave them to him very slowly in order that, when he had as much as was requisite, he might intimate to me he was ready to conduct me inside. Having tied up the money in a corner of his turban, he went inside the room where I had seen the serishtadar, and shortly after returned to the door and beckoned me. I stepped boldly in, and found myself in the presence of Mr. Dakhil Duftar, who was seated at a table, and the serishtadar opposite to him. The collector sahib was writing something, which the serishtadar was dictating to him in Hindustani. After a second or two, he looked up, and then looked at the serishtadar as much as to ask, who I was.

“ ‘This,’ said the serishtadar, ‘is a carpenter who has registered his name to compete for the prize at the exhibition.’ ”

"At last, then, you succeeded in reaching the collector sahib, and what did he say to you?"

"He said 'uchha jao' (very well, go away), and I came away."

If Selim had entertained any doubts as to my sanity before, these doubts must have been confirmed by the roars of laughter with which I greeted this last announcement.

"So, after two days' labour and the expenditure of, let's see, how much, of exactly seventy-five rupees, you received this flattering encouragement, 'uchcha jao' from the collector sahib. Well done!" and I took up the *Gazette* and read again the last paragraph of the Lieutenant-Governor's minute directing the Budgepore exhibition to be held.

"There can be little doubt but that the exhibition will serve as a stimulus to industry, which will aid in developing genius in arts and manufactures, and by bringing the skilled artizan and the intelligent agriculturist into the notice of the authorities will afford exactly that encouragement to labour and progress which the country so much needs."

Next day I went to Dakhil Duftar, full of confidence in the success of my scheme. The kotwal had got the knick-knacks, the serishtadar the fifty rupee note, the number of which I had, and the rupees the chiprassces had taken

were all marked. "Dakhil Duftar's eyes will be opened not a little now I should say."

I found him at home about eleven o'clock,—his usual hour for going to cutcherry varied between twelve and two. I told him plainly of my scheme, its object, and success, but was a little taken aback when he remarked,—

"Then it seems to me you have been nicely duped. Your man sold the things and kept the money, and has told you this cock-and-bull story. All the people about me, I assure you, are persons of integrity and character."

"Well, it is easily tested," I said; "suppose, to begin with the kotwal, you ask him if he has got the knick-knacks."

"Certainly I will," said Dakhil Duftar. "He is outside. We will call him in at once."

When he came in Dakhil Duftar motioned him to a chair, and as soon as he was seated, he said,—

"Kotwal sahib, this gentleman has missed some little knick-knacks, a carved wooden paper-knife, trays, boxes, and one or two things of that sort. He thinks it possible some one may have taken them away with the view of passing them off as his own workmanship for the exhibition."

"The 'huzoor's' intelligence is as the sun at noonday," replied the kotwal. "Certainly it

it so, your slave has these articles. They are not here, it is true, but I will send for them at once, and they will be here directly. It is as the 'huzoor' suggests. A carpenter came yesterday to have his name enrolled as a competitor for the prize at the exhibition, and presented sundry articles to me as specimens of his handiwork; they were, indeed, very well executed, and I kept them by me to show them to the 'huzoor,' as I did not know before that any man in Budgepore could produce anything like them, and I am sure the 'huzoor' will be much pleased with them."

"Now," said I, as the kotwal left the room, feeling very triumphant at my success so far, "let us try the serishtadar next, and see if he cannot find the fifty rupee note. Suppose you send for him and say that I have lost a note of that amount, and he is to put up an advertisement offering ten rupees reward to any one who will produce it. And don't forget to add the number, which is 047074, and that I have stopped it at the bank, and let us see what he says."

"Certainly," said Dakhil Duftar. "I don't know about the note, but it is perfectly clear the kotwal had no intention of retaining those articles. If he had, why should he have confessed to having them in his possession?"

By and by the serishtadar came in, and Dakhil Duftar told him exactly as I had instructed him.

"What an unlucky wretch I am," said the serishtadar, the moment Dakhil Duftar had ceased speaking, "I do believe now that is the very self same note I received this morning for my pony. Let me see, here it is." So saying, he produced the identical note, which I recognized immediately.

"Where did you get it?" said Dakhil Duftar.

"Where should I get it from but in payment of that very pony I sold this morning to Mr. Archimedes DeCruze? The cost of the animal was fifty rupees, and Mr. DeCruze paid me in this very note. The 'huzoor' will see it is the exact sum; only to think of its being stolen!"

"Send for Mr. Archimedes DeCruze," said Dakhil Duftar.

"I will call him. I saw him only this moment in the other room," said the serishtadar, leaving abruptly to summon him.

Mr. Archimedes DeCruze made his appearance in a few minutes, during which I looked triumphantly at Dakhil Duftar, as much as to say, "Now for the integrity and character of the people about you!"

"Did you give the serishtadar this note?"

said Dakhil Duftar, showing the note to Archimedes.

"Certainly I did, Sir—only this morning. I purchased a pony from him and paid him with this note."

"And where did you get it from?"

"I got it yesterday from Bankee Lall, the mahajun," (native money-lender or banker).

"Send for Bankee Lall," said Dakhil Duftar.

We had to wait a little for Bankee Lall; however, he soon came, and said, in reply to a question from Dakhil Duftar, that he had received the note from a man he did not know the day before, who asked him to change it, and he had paid four rupees, or eight per cent., for the exchange.

"Who would have thought it was a stolen note!" added Bankee Lall.

"Send for your servant, will you," said Dakhil Duftar to me.

Selim was summoned.

"What is his name?" asked Dakhil Duftar.

"*Ex uno disce omnes*," said I.

"A curious name for a native," said Dakhil Duftar, and then pointing to Selim and addressing Bankee Lall, he added "was that the man you got the note from?"

"Certainly, it is the very same, I recognise him at once," said Bankee Lall.

"Now," said Dakhil Duftar, turning to me,

"I think you'll admit you've been pretty well duped."

"There are the chiprassees, yet," said I. "Let one of them be searched, and let us see if any of the marked coin is found upon them."

"By all means. Let us go outside. I dare say we shall find one of them there somewhere with the kotwal."

So we went outside, and took Selim, now very much chapfallen and disconcerted, and who seemed to think the whole affair was a trap I had laid for him.

He soon recognised one of the chiprassees to whom he had given the money at the kotwallee the day before. Dakhil Duftar called him up at once and asked him if he had any money about him. . .

"Certainly I have," said the man. "I sold a ring this very morning on my way through the bazar, and received five rupees for it. This is how I came to have so much money about me, for a poor man as your slave is does not usually carry about five rupees with him."

So saying, he produced five rupees, which Dakhil Duftar handed to me. I examined them all, and found my initials, O.M., marked on each.

"Let us come inside," said Dakhil Duftar,

appearing a little impressed now with what I had said.

"Look at this rupee," he added, handing one of them to the serishtadar, "did you ever see a rupee marked like this before?"

"Oh, yes," said the serishtadar, "nearly all the rupees current in Budgepore are marked in this very same way. This is how we can always tell in our villages and elsewhere whether a man has come from Budgepore or not. If he has money marked in this way we know he has come from Budgepore, or else he must have got money here somehow. Many a 'foujdary' (criminal) case has been traced in this very way."

"Perhaps you will say the serishtadar is not an impartial witness," said Dakhil Duftar. "Let us call some one else. Call Mr. Archimedes DeCruze."

Mr. DeCruze was accordingly again summoned (I believe he had been listening all the time behind the door).

"Did you ever see rupees marked in this way, Mr. DeCruze, 'O.M.'?"

"O yes, certainly," said Mr. DeCruze, examining the coin, "an immense number of Budgepore rupees are marked in this way. I once enquired of a mahajun what the letters meant, and he said they were the initial letters

of a great banker who lived here formerly, Omichund Mull."

"There, you see," said Dakhil Duftar, putting the money on the table, "how you have been outwitted by that scoundrel of yours."

"Assuredly the huzoor's intelligence is as the sun at noonday," I said to myself, repeating the kotwal's words, as I drove home. And the exhibition will serve to develope genius and act as an incentive to industry!

THE BUDGEPORE EXHIBITION.

CHAPTER II.

HOW MRS. FILEETER LED THE CHOIR, AND WHAT WAS THE CONSEQUENCE THEREOF.

THE time for the exhibition drew near. The building was nearly completed. The programme of the opening ceremonies was being arranged, and amateur performers were busy practising daily for a grand instrumental and vocal concert in honour of the occasion.

A serious difficulty had arisen at this juncture which threatened at one time to be followed by fatal results as regarded the musical programme. Mrs. Wasilbakee had not returned from Simla till all the arrangements had been cut and dried. She was a very good performer, and had a fine voice besides, but independently of that, if she had been proficient in neither instrumental nor vocal music, as the

commissioner's wife it would have been quite necessary that she should have taken a prominent part. I say the arrangements had all been completed before she came down, and so they had. I don't at all know how it happened, from some oversight I suppose, and it is really impossible always to prevent mistakes in matters of this kind, but it had been so clumsily managed that Mrs. Fileter, who had a very beautiful voice, and a nicely educated one, too, for she had begun life as a French governess and had been herself educated in Paris, had been asked and had consented to take a leading part in the performance. I say, a leading part, for if she took any part at all it must necessarily have been a leading one; as she knew a great deal more about music than any of the other amateurs, it was quite natural she should be repeatedly referred to in such matters as selection of pieces, appropriation of parts, &c.

The first day Mrs. Wasilbakee attended the practice it was at Dakhil Duftar's house. She came in a little late after they had all begun, and had been in the room some five minutes or so before her presence was noticed, as the others were all intent on their music. She looked about and beheld familiar faces with open mouths all round her. But at the piano sat a lady she did not know. When the piece

was over she shook hands with Mrs. Dakhil Duftar and a few of the other ladies who happened to be near the ottoman where she was seated.

"Can you tell me who that lady is who has been playing the accompaniment, she has splendid execution."

"Oh yes, that's Mrs. Fileeter."

"Mrs, who?"

"Mrs. Fileeter—the deputy collector's wife."

"How in the world did you ask her to join?"

"I didn't," said Mrs. Dakhil Duftar, and, indeed, I don't know who did. But she plays most beautifully."

"I think I'll say good morning," said Mrs. Wasilbakee, getting up to go. "My head is so bad to-day that I am sure I shall not be able to sing. Goodbye."

And Mrs. Wasilbakee went. But through one of those undefined processes by which public feeling becomes affected before undergoing some great change, it began to be felt in Budgepore, that Budgepore had committed a *faux pas* in asking Mrs. Fileeter to take a part in the musical programme. No doubt the change was due in a great measure to Mrs. Wasilbakee's very strong opinion on this point. Several ladies sided with her, particularly those who belonged to the Lieutenant-

Governor's party, and who happened at that time to be guests of the Commissioner's wife, and many of the Budgeporeans thought it politic and proper to form an alliance in this quarter. The matter became a subject of ceaseless conversation at all the parties and little assemblies where the female sex alone was represented. In the drawing-room after dinner, before the gentlemen came in, at *chotá hazrees* in the morning when no gentlemen happened to be present, and especially at the choir practice at the church, the *pros* and *cons* were discussed, some at first siding with the liberal party, who approved of Mrs. Fileter, others, and the majority, agreeing with Mrs. Wasilbakee and the head-quarters ladies that on no account ought she to have been asked to join. Now that the mischief had been done, it was exceedingly difficult to undo it. They could not send Mrs. Fileter about her business, nor could the most inventive genius among the fair Budgeporeans devise any decent excuse for getting rid of her. Great as would have been the loss of her voice and advice, her taste, her accompaniment, that they were quite ready to put up with, if only the greater difficulty, that of Mrs. Fileter's husband belonging to the uncovenanted service, could be by any means removed. This, of course, was impossible, and what was to be done?

Had Mrs. Fileeter conceived the least idea of the trouble her presence was giving, she would at once have relieved her friends of all their anxiety by resigning her place in the exhibition programme. I dare say that would not have been done without a pang. Human nature has its inherent weaknesses from which few of us are free, and Mrs. Fileeter would have been more than a woman if she had not experienced a little pride and gratification in contemplating the position she had been accorded in Budgepore "society." The meetings for practising were generally followed by tiffins, and, as a matter of course, Mrs. Fileeter remained to take her part in these. After tiffin, the ladies generally adjourned to croquet, and here, again, Mrs. Fileeter could not by any possibility be left out. It may readily be supposed that the ladies' croquet parties were speedily joined by the gentlemen as soon as their office work was over, and by the officers who had no office work to keep them away, as soon as they began to play. Mrs. Fileeter thus found herself within the charmed circle whose limits she would not have crossed had she tried ever so hard, had it not been for the exhibition. The question was, and my Anglo-Indian readers will see at once that it was a very difficult question, how was all this to be undone,—how was Mrs. Fileeter to be got rid of. For I

grieve to have to record it, that one by one Mrs. Fileeter's supporters dropped off, till at last it came to be an admitted principle, that if it were possible to get rid of Mrs. Fileeter, Mrs. Fileeter was to be got rid of. If it were not possible, then in that case it did not indeed appear exactly what would be the result, but Mrs. Wasilbakee was determined that the result should be the total abandonment of the musical programme. In dead silence or to the vulgar strains of a military band should the opening ceremonies be performed. Fairly beaten by the difficulty, none of them could overcome it. Mrs. Wasilbakee was fain to have recourse to her husband. And to him one evening she opened her griefs. His vigorous and manly intellect at once embraced the subject in all its phases.

"Pooh! my dear, is that all—why that is very easily managed."

"I declare I don't see how. I wish I had spoken to you before. You make so light of it, and I am sure it's given me many and many a sleepless night."

"You should have taken me into your confidence before, you see. You ladies always think you can do things so much better than we can, but you are obliged to come to us after all."

“But you hav’nt told me how you are going to do it. You will not speak to Mr. Fileeter about it?”

“Oh no, I shall do it in a much easier way, by a demi-official.”

“You don’t mean to say you’ll write to him! Why, he’ll send the letter to the papers, and that will be worse than all.”

“No, I’ll write a demi-official to the Lieutenant-Governor, and have Fileeter removed at once to another district.”

“There’s a good creature,” and Mrs. Wasilbakee rewarded her husband with a kiss, and hastened to write a short note to Mrs. Dakhil Duftar to tell her that the burden which had been hanging like an incubus on them so long was all removed as if by magic.

So Mr. Wasilbakee wrote a demi-official to Mr. Khas Mouza, and Mr. Khas Mouza communicated the contents thereof to the Lieutenant-Governor, and an order appeared in the very next *Gazette* directing the removal of Mr. Fileeter, who had been twenty years at Budgepore, to another district. Meantime an official letter was dispatched to Mr. Fileeter telling him in highly flattering terms that his services were much required at Jhansi, that H. H. regretted the necessity of removing so old and well tried an officer, but that the exigencies of

the public service required that the Jhansie treasury should have the advantage of Mr. Fileeter's experience.

The blow was a severe one to Mr. Fileeter. There was no increase of pay to be looked for as a compensation for the trouble and enormous expense and loss of moving, the furniture and things would have to be sold by auction, for he was ordered down at a week's notice, and it was too far to transport them—indeed he could not afford to pay for their transport. But what could he do? To remonstrate was worse than useless. He could only console himself with the reflection that the Lieutenant-Governor's flattering sentences really meant something, and that Government would never subject him to so much trouble and expense unless they intended to make it up to him hereafter in some way or other.

Of all the ladies at Budgepore, Mrs. Fitzmisl sympathised the most with Mrs. Fileeter. Mr. Fitzmisl had married before he came out, a thing which no one but a competition walla was ever known to do. It was an innovation that came in along with the competition system. The old orthodox custom was for a civilian as a bachelor to get himself well into debt during the first few years of his service and then marry. But a competition walla who came out married was pretty sure not

to get into debt. He would have to live carefully, very carefully, to screw in fact, as the other and older branch of the service called it, to make both ends meet upon an assistant's pay. And Mrs. Fitzmisl had tasted all the bitters of poverty before her husband emerged into the full pay and position of a joint. It had, however, taught her to acquire homely habits, and habits of economy. And although she mixed, of course, in a great deal of the society of Budgepore, she did it against her will, and in opposition to her inclinations. I cannot exactly explain why this should have been a bond of union between her and Mrs. Fileeter, but so it was. Perhaps it arose from the fact that Mrs. Fitzmisl came to be looked down upon a little by the rest in consequence of her persistence in avoiding extravagance of all kinds and keeping her husband out of debt.

She shared the anxiety and distress of the other Budgeporeans in their difficulty about getting rid of Mrs. Fileeter, when once the real character of that difficulty was disclosed to her. At first she did not see, as many of the others had not seen, the gross impropriety they had been guilty of, till Mrs. Wasilbakee had shown it to them in its true light and full intensity. As soon as her eyes were opened, she acknowledged its gravity, and sought in vain, like the others, for some solution from

the difficulty. Still, for all that, she did sympathize with Mrs. Fileeter, and, as I have said, was more intimate with her than any of the others.

No sooner was the transfer of Mr. Fileeter notified in the *Gazette*, and the world of Budgepore had triumphed in the success of its scheme, than its cup of joy was dashed from its lips, by the announcement made by Mrs. Fileeter herself, that she did not intend to accompany her husband, but should leave him to go on before her, get a house, and settle, &c., and she should proceed to join him after the exhibition was over. Here was a blow! But Budgepore proved equal to the occasion. Gunny Lall was spoken to, and it needed a few words of kindly advice only from the commissioner, for him to open his money-bags and invest in Mr. Fileeter's house, paying a good sum for it, on condition of immediate occupation. Mrs. Fileeter's conduct had been very much blamed. Mrs. Wasilbakee thought it was exceedingly wrong of her to let her husband go all alone to a new station, and Mrs. Dakhil Duftar agreed with Mrs. Wasilbakee, adding that it was not at all like a good wife to separate from her husband so unnecessarily. This was also the opinion of most of the other ladies, but it came with peculiar force from those two, who steadily went to Simla every year for the six

month's season. However, Mrs. Fileeter would now be forced to keep her marriage vows to the very letter.

Fitzmisl, who knew nothing of all that was going on, for Mr. Wasilbakee was the only one of the gentlemen who had been taken into confidence, one day on returning from cutcherry, when his wife happened to be out, found a note had just arrived from Mrs. Fileeter, and he opened and answered it. When his wife came home, about half an hour afterwards, he said,—

“There is a note, Jane, from Mrs. Fileeter that came when you were out. I have answered it, as I thought it was not worth while keeping it to ask you, there can be but one reply to it.”

Mrs. Fitzmisl read the note, and asked with more excitement than Fitzmisl thought the matter justified,—

“What did you say, dear?”

“I said of course we should be happy to see her, there is the spare room, you know, and we have no one else coming. I am very glad to be able to accommodate her.”

“What *will* Mrs. Wasilbakee say?” was Mrs. Fitzmisl's rejoinder.

“Mrs. Wasilbakee! I don't see what she has to say to it.”

“Ah, you don't know. You should always ask me, my dear, before you answer notes of this kind,”—and Mrs. Fitzmisl ran out of the

room, stopped the carriage which was being taken to the stables, and drove at once to Mrs. Wasilbakee's.

That lady was again checked. Mrs. Filecter had asked the Fitzmisls to put her up till the exhibition was over, and Fitzmisl had good-naturedly consented.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and Fitzmisl had cause, though he didn't know it, to congratulate himself on being so good-natured. Mrs. Wasilbakee's interest with Mrs. Byewilwuffa was powerful, and, much to the amazement of Fitzmisl, he received a few days after a letter from Mr. Khas Mouza, the secretary, informing him he had been transferred to another district, and he was to proceed to join his new appointment at once. Fitzmisl, however, was a covenanted civilian, and it would not do to move him without an increase of pay, so he was promoted to the higher grade of joint magistrate upon one thousand in lieu of seven hundred rupees a month.

Again did the Budgepore world triumph, and again was it destined to disappointment.

Mrs. Filecter, quite unconscious of the anxiety she was causing by her movements, resolved to ask the Chillans to take her in, as the Fitzmisls were to break up their establishment at once. Chillan was inspecting Post-Master of Budgepore, and occupied a sort

of amphibious or hybrid existence, sometimes bathing himself in the full light of Budgepore "society," and sometimes laving himself in the waters situated just below that Elysium. Mrs. Chillan was ambitious. He, a sensible sort of man, was pretty well indifferent as to the circle of society he moved in, so long as he met with a welcome and found himself in the company of people he liked and who liked him. But Mrs. Chillan was not content with this. She grieved over the want of noble aspirations in her spouse, and was resolved to force him into the higher sphere by dint of her own personal influence. The consequence was that the Chillans were always seen at all the public balls at Budgepore, but never at the private entertainments of the aristocratic world. Mr. Chillan gave in to his wife's whims on the subject good-naturedly enough, went to the balls with her, and sat them out like a man. He could, however, see, if she could not, exactly how matters stood.

Mrs. Chillan, in the equivocal position she held, hanging, as it were, between Elysium and the world below it, was not at all sorry to accede to Mrs. Fileeter's request to take her in. She would have a companion to accompany her to all the exhibition gaieties, a companion, too, who had made good and better footing than she had within that charmed

circle she so much longed to enter. It was a lucky day for Chillan that Mrs. Fileeter be-
thought herself of soliciting the hospitality of his roof.

It so happened that Major Soosti, Postmaster-General, had just passed the Board, and was on the point of going home on medical certificate. He was, indeed, very ill, and what made his case the more serious was, that the doctors did not seem thoroughly to understand it. However, his medical attendant described the case in the certificate as a serious, and what might prove a fatal, case of "Inertia," and the Medical Board at Budgepore, who had never heard of this disease, took for granted it was a new discovery, and as none of the medical gentlemen composing the board had seen an English medical periodical, or a new medical work, for some little time, they were afraid of disclosing their ignorance if they sent the certificate back or rejected Major Soosti's application on the ground that they did not recognise the peculiar disease under which the applicant was suffering.

So Major Soosti, who had been Postmaster-General for fifteen years, passed the board and went home, just before Mrs. Fileeter went to pay her visit to the Chillans. To Chillan's great joy he was appointed to officiate for

Major Soosti, and received orders to proceed immediately and take charge of the office.

Mrs. Fileter's resources in the circle of the civil community being now exhausted, she betook herself to the military. She was intimate with the Butts. Lieutenant Butt was Interpreter and Quarter-master of the 78th Native Infantry then quartered at Budgepore, under the command of that distinguished officer Colonel Gotobed. The 78th N. I. was a little under-officered, as were many of the old Bengal regiments in the old days, and, indeed, I do not know that the new Bengal regiments of native infantry are much better off in these days. If the old Bengal army may be said to have been under-officered formerly, it may perhaps be said to be un-officered now. However that may be, the 78th N. I., under the command of Colonel Gotobed, had present with it the adjutant (a lieutenant, of course), the quarter-master and interpreter, and an ensign. These three officers held all the ten companies between them. The adjutant and interpreter holding four each, and the ensign two.

A short time before the period of which I am speaking, the junior lieutenant had been removed to fill the office of sub-assistant commissary-general on probation. Lieutenant Butt had applied for the appointment; he being a

passed officer,* of course, as he was interpreter, but was told in reply that His Excellency was most anxious to oblige him, but that there were so many officers absent from the 78th N. I. on staff employ already, it was impossible to remove any more; notwithstanding which, within a week, the junior lieutenant, who had great interest, was removed to fill this very appointment, although he had never passed.

Mrs. Wasilbakee's interest was not confined to the civil department of the service. She was very intimate with the Commander-in-Chief, Lady Grubb. When I call Lady Grubb Commander-in-Chief, I mean that she was *de facto*, though her husband, Sir Walter Grubb, was of course, *de jure*, Commander-in-Chief. Mrs. Wasilbakee went to Simla every year, as I have already stated, and there she was a strong and powerful ally of Lady Grubb's in all the little social contests that enlivened existence in Simla saloons. The result of all this and of Mrs. Fileeter's visit to the Butts, was that Butt, much to his surprise, and greatly to his satisfaction, received a letter from the Military Secretary, Colonel Gajur, offering him the appointment of adjutant to the 28th Musalchees, an appointment he much coveted. The

* An officer cannot hold the appointment of Interpreter until he has passed an examination in the Native Languages.

28th Musalchees was a very crack regiment of irregular horse, commanded by Captain Chumcha, who got so much fame in his campaign against the Moorhies and Doongas, several of which fierce and savage tribes he had slain with his own hand in single combat. Mrs. Fileeter's visit at the Butts was thus cut short, for one condition of the offer of the appointment was that Butt should join immediately. This, of course, he was delighted to do, and he lost no time in selling off his furniture, and procuring a loan from the Agra Bank of two thousand rupees to pay for the uniform, which was very expensive, as it was exceedingly gorgeous, having been designed by Captain Chumcha himself, and consisting of something between the uniform of the Blues and that of the Russian Life Guards.

The triumph of the *beau monde* of Budgepore was again destined to be very short-lived, for Mrs. Gotobed having heard, of course, of Mrs. Fileeter's visit to the Butts being cut short, very kindly wrote and asked her to come and stay with them till the exhibition was over. This invitation was accepted.

And now, I dare say, you will think Mrs. Wasilbakee and the fair conspirators were checkmated. They had been checked several times before, but this looked very like a checkmate. You must, however, recollect St. Kevin,

"Ah! the good saint little knew
What the wily sex can do."

One morning, the week after Mrs. Fileeter had moved to the Gotobeds, while they were at breakfast, a telegram was put into the Colonel's hands.

"I wonder what this can be about," said the colonel, turning the red envelope over and over in his hand.

"Look inside and perhaps you'll find out," laconically observed Mrs. Gotobed.

"Bless me!" said the Colonel, as he read the telegram, "listen to this."

"From Quarter-Master-General

"To Colonel Gotobed. Budgepore.

"The 78th N. I. is to march at once to Mirichpoor." Written orders follow by post, make immediate preparations."

"There must be something very serious the matter at Mirichpoor," said Colonel Gotobed.

"Some disturbance among the tribes, I dare say," said his wife. "I hope there'll be no fighting."

"They want an officer of experience down there, no doubt," observed the colonel.

"Well, my dear, it is an inconvenient move for us to make just now, but it can't be helped."

Of course the news spread through Budgepore like wild-fire, that the 78th N. I. had received orders by telegram to march for Mirichpoor. And in a very short time the report was supplemented by another to account for the move, viz., that some serious disturbance had broken

out in that neighbourhood. There was, however, no certain intelligence, and the public were left very much in the dark till a paragraph appeared in the *Sycophant*; a paper then published at Budgepore. The *Sycophant* belonged to a joint stock company, and the shareholders were principally officials, some of them holding tolerably high appointments in the service. The paper prided itself on being a Government organ, and made a great deal, at least the shareholders did, of sundry scraps of most authentic information furnished to it from time to time by those of the proprietors who had access to Government records. What with circulating vast numbers of gratis copies, and supplying the shareholders with ten gratis copies each, and reducing the price of their advertisements to a figure below what any other paper would take, they managed to make a show of prosperity. Well, the *Sycophant*, fresh from the authentic sources of official information, gave its readers the following explanation of the sudden move of the 78th N. I., which had so much puzzled the public:—

“ We hear that the threatening aspect of the political horizon in and about Mirichpoor has necessitated the immediate move of the 78th N. I., under command of that experienced officer, Colonel Gotobed, from Budgepore.

“ The regiment received its orders to march

by telegram from the Quarter-Master-General the day before yesterday, and there is every reason to believe that the presence, on the spot, of a regiment so efficient and so well trained, and under an officer of Colonel Gotobed's known reputation, will have the effect of speedily restoring order in the disturbed districts."

So the 78th N. I. marched exactly a week after the receipt of the telegram, but Mrs. Gotobed remained behind at Budgepore, and asked Mrs. Fileeter to stay and keep her company!

The official channels at the disposal of Mrs. Wasilbakee, and the Head Quarters ladies were now fairly exhausted. They had managed to get Mr. Fileeter transferred to Jhansie, Fitzmisil promoted and removed to Bareilly, Chillan had by the same means been made officiating Post Master General, Lieut. Butt had been appointed adjutant of the 28th Musalchees, and last, though not least, the 78th N. I. had marched to Mirichpoor. Still, Mrs. Fileeter kept her place at the exhibition choir, and used to attend the practice and sing as sweetly, and play the accompaniments as composedly, as if not a ripple had disturbed the placid surface of the waters of the Budgepore world.

We sometimes realize what unimportant and helpless creatures we are in controlling the course of events. All the influence of Mrs. Wasilbakee and the ladies of the Lieutenant-

Governor's staff, which meant in reality all the influence of the Government, all the influence of Lady Grubb, which was another word for all the power and patronage of the head of the army in India, and, indeed, I may say, all the power of Government beside, were powerless to effect the removal of a weak, almost friendless woman from the station of Budgepore. And yet that very end was attained by the simplest of all possible means, nothing more than a piece of orange-peel. It happened one day that Mr. Fileeter came home from cutcherry thirsty. He had been there all day since ten o'clock in the morning, and it was now six P.M. He would much have preferred not having to return tired and jaded to a solitary, dismal bungalow, and cannot one of your great gloomy bungalows, whose roof comes down to within about five feet of the ground, excluding air and light, be gloomy and cheerless when you return to it about six o'clock in the evening after a hard day's work, and find it, as you know, empty,—no wife to greet you with a smile, no child to run up and catch you round the knee—well, I was saying, Mr. Fileeter returned home at six o'clock one day, and, being thirsty, ate an orange. A very simple process, yet attended with how important results! He threw the peel out in the verandah—a very untidy thing to do, but then,

you see, he was a gräss bachelor. In the evening, after dinner, before going to bed, he went out to take a turn in the garden, and walking across the verandah, put his foot on the orange-peel, slipped and fell, and sprained his ankle very severely.

A few days after, a letter was put into Mrs. Fileeter's hand from her husband, telling her of the accident, and saying that he was confined to his bed, and likely to be so for some time, and sorry as he was to interfere with her plans and prevent her from having the pleasure of witnessing the exhibition and enjoying its attendant gaieties, he was obliged, in his helpless state, to bid her come to him. Mrs. Fileeter lost no time in obeying the summons. She prepared to start that very night.

Before she went, however, she wrote a note to Mrs. Wasilbakee, telling her what had happened, and of her intended departure, and received a very kind note in reply from that lady, saying how sorry they all were that Mrs. Fileeter was forced to leave them, and especially from such a cause, and how much they would miss her, and ended by saying she hoped she would find Mr. Fileeter better.

As Mrs. Fileeter's dak carriage rolled away with her that evening, Budgepore breathed more freely than it had done for many a long day.

THE BUDGEPORE EXHIBITION.

CHAPTER III.

SHOWING HOW COLONEL MACDARE, SINGLE-
HANDED, ATTACKED THE "DEPARTMENTS."

My readers, who are behind the scenes, know well enough the secret springs that set in motion that gallant regiment, the 78th N. I *en route* to Mirichpoor. Not so the outside world, who were informed through the veracious columns of the *Sycophant* that it was the disturbed state of the district that rendered it necessary to direct the march.

This was all very well of course so far as the good-natured, unreflecting, put-upon and easily-deluded public were concerned. And there is not a public in the whole of this wide wide world, which is more easily contented and thankful for smaller mercies than the Indian. Of course I mean the Anglo-Indian public. There was a native public

once, but it had such a very objectionable way of maintaining its vitality, and asserting its rights that was altogether incompatible with civilized life, namely, murdering unarmed men, women and little children, that it became necessary to put an end to its existence altogether, and it was suddenly put an end to, after a short life of one year, Ann. Dom. 1858. The Anglo-Indian public is a patient beast, extremely like a certain animal once held in much reputation in Judæa; but in modern days marked out for drudgery, ill-treatment and contempt. If it lies quiet, it gets kicked for being lazy, indolent and indifferent. When it makes a noise, it gets kicked for being troublesome. It has no particular food given to it, but is allowed to pick up what offal it can from heaps of vegetable refuse. It is made to do all the hard work and carry all the burdens, and although things could not go on a single day without it, nevertheless it is repeatedly told between the blows that are dealt upon its bony carcass, "that it has no business in the country, why doesn't it go out of it, but that as long as it chooses to stay, all the hard work shall fall to its share, and instead of getting half-pence in return, it shall have nothing but kicks." The fact being that the miserable half-starved creature is so weak and emaciated that it has not strength to leave the country, however much it might wish to do so.

I say it was all very well so far as the public went, for the *Sycophant* to put in that paragraph explaining the sudden move of the 78th N. I. But you may like to know how the intelligence was received at Mirichpoor itself. And here the *Sycophant*, as they say, counted without his host, which means that he forgot that his paragraph would be read at Mirichpoor, and above all he forgot it would be read by Colonel Macdare.

Now Colonel Macdare, who was Commissioner of Mirichpoor, was about the worst man in the whole of India upon whom it was safe to attempt to play a trick. He was a little man, but he had a large heart in a diminutive body. Though small in size, he was physically well developed, his bones might have been iron and his sinews wire, and his limbs made by nature for a model of what the human frame ought to be when best adapted for vigorous active life. A dashing fearless soldier was Colonel Macdare, one of those men of whom the Indian service may well be proud. They were more plentiful in former years than they are now.

He first came into notice in the Affghan war where his cool intrepidity and amazing powers of endurance speedily attracted the attention of such men as Sale and Pollock, Among his other qualities he had that which I think more than anything else contains in it the seeds of

greatness, the power of influencing other men. And this made him valuable as a political officer in those troubled times, when Captain Macdare, as he was then, was known by his personal influence over wild tribes to have kept a whole district quiet, without so much as a single soldier to enforce his authority.

It is a painful reflection to make, but it is nevertheless perfectly true, that in our country, that is either in England or India, but more especially in the latter, great and noble qualities and brilliant services are not in themselves sufficient to bring a man into the position in public life he is fitted to hold. Something else is required, a man must be to a certain extent a courtier besides. He may do the most gallant deeds in the world, but unless he or his friends for him can manage a little of the "simpering in gilded saloons," his worth will not be recognized. I know there are exceptions, and I think Lord Lawrence is one of them, but these exceptions prove the rule, which certainly in the case of Colonel Macdare held good. Such services as his were fit to be rewarded with the highest appointment Government had it in their power to confer. But far inferior men, by the process known as suction, got themselves promoted, and Captain Macdare was considered sufficiently well provided for by being made Commissioner of Mirichpoor.

There, as in every position in life he had ever held, he set himself to do his best heartily.. He was an enthusiast in his work, and thought nothing beneath his notice which, if well done, would contribute to the happiness of a single human being and which if ill done, might entail inconvenience or loss on any one. He was one of those men who serve the Government well. They seem to think the bargain between them and their employers involves the delivery on their part of all the powers of their body and intellect for the term of their natural life, or as long as they remain employed. There is another class of men who think the bargain involves yet more, and who in exchange for their monthly pay consider the purchaser entitled not only to their intellectual and physical powers, but something else besides.

Colonel Macdare, however, was not one of these. Government was entitled to the last drop of his life's blood, to his time, his genius, his pen, his mental faculties, but to nothing else. He never signed a dispatch that was not every word of it scrupulously true. He never wrote one thing in an official and another in a demi-official. He never allowed the favour of his superiors or the hope of promotion to swerve him one hair's breadth from the path of honour, justice and truth.

There was one thing he took a real pleasure

in, it was his hobby, and that was the state of his district. He would almost as soon have listened quietly to an imputation on his wife's honour, as on the condition of his district. You may imagine, then, his feelings when opening the *Sycophant* one morning at breakfast time (the *Sycophant* was supplied gratis to all officials of Colonel Macdare's rank), he read the paragraph already quoted, to the effect that the 78th N. I. had been ordered at once by telegram to Mirichpoor on account of the disturbed state of the district. Had a shell fallen into the room he would not have started from his chair more promptly, nay, it is probable he would not have exhibited half the emotion he did now. That any one should breathe in secret that the Mirichpoor district was in anything but a state of absolute repose, was a thing not to be contemplated without emotion. If he had heard such a slander uttered in a small circle among his acquaintances, he would have felt it deeply: it would have given him no rest till it had been contradicted in the fullest, most decisive manner. But that the statement should appear in the columns of a newspaper, in all the imposing features of editorial type! This was too bad. Englishmen do not tear their hair in real life. I have lived two score of years with my fellow men, and never yet saw but one man tear his hair,

and that was a native, who was apparently afflicted with the most dreadful disease that can attack the sons of Adam—he was in love. He did tear his hair: he tore his hair, his clothes, and rolled himself on the ground at the feet of the obdurate fair one in a most frantic manner. And she was excessively dirty and very ill-dressed, and very ill-looking, and I much wondered at such an exhibition of feeling on her account. But I never saw an Englishman tear his hair except on the stage, although I have often read of it in novels. Colonel Macdare did not exactly tear his hair, but he did put his two hands to his head, and grasped the roots of his hair when he saw those lines in the *Sycophant*. Mrs. Macdare was at that time in England, and the Colonel was residing alone, and so it happened that there was no one in the room except his khitmutgar when the event occurred. Had you been there you might have seen Colonel Macdare standing in the attitude I have described, his feet a little apart, both his hands meeting on the top of his head grasping the hair, gazing with horror, indignation, wrath, and sorrow upon the columns of the *Sycophant*, which was on the breakfast-table before him, and there stood his khitmutgar just behind him, rooted to the spot and trembling with fear. All the natives were very much in awe of Colonel Macdare. He was to

them as Fate, stern, inexorable, unbending; unlike Fate, in that they knew him to be just. But natives are slow to understand our motives, and cannot the least trace the connection between our actions, and the intention or the will that prompts them. So when Colonel Macdare broke off suddenly in the act of cracking his egg with an egg-spoon, started from his chair and stood erect with his two hands grasping the roots of his hair, the khitmutgar was petrified with fear, for it at once occurred to him that the Colonel had discovered something most awful and tremendous inside the egg. The khitmutgar, whose mind was intent on his master's breakfast, did not, of course, think of the newspaper as in any way connected with the Colonel's great and sudden emotion. So he kept his eyes fixed on the egg, trembling like an aspen leaf, and expecting every instant to see a huge serpent or a dragon uncoil itself, and rising from the egg-shell, develop into a full grown reptile of supernatural proportions.

While the Colonel was in this attitude, a servant entered with the morning budget of letters, and put them on the table. But, seeing his master's posture, and instinctively regarding the innocent egg as the cause of it, immediately ran away, and told all the servants, of whom there were thirty in the establishment altogether,

that the "Burra Sahib" had found a "jin" in the egg, and was bewitched, as a preliminary step to being devoured or transformed into a pig.

The report spread over the whole station in a marvellously short space of time, as reports very soon spread in India.

This exciting intelligence found the public mind in a condition only too well calculated to receive impression. Gopal Chunder, the head baboo, or clerk in the post office, always liked to have the first news of everything, and accordingly, by a little skilful manipulation, known to post-office employés, it was his custom every morning to open and read Colonel Macdare's newspapers before they were delivered to the orderly. This morning he had been much astonished at the paragraph in the *Sycophant* which had caused Colonel Macdare so much emotion, and, not being a very perfect English scholar, he derived from it rather a confused idea of the state of affairs at Mirichpoor. This much was clear, that a regiment was on its way, and disturbances were imminent. The *Sycophant* got its news from Government officers. He himself, when a clerk in the Adjutant-General's office a year before, had several times sent off little scraps by order of the Adjutant-General, containing the orders which were to appear in the *Gazette* the following day, and which the *Sycophant* was thus

enabled to publish a day before, and no one, the baboo thought, could possibly doubt the veracity of intelligence derived from such a quarter. As soon might you look for impurities in the snow-flake, or the rain-drop that falls from heaven. Bursting with the startling news, Gopal Chunder hastened off to the bazar.

The old Eastern proverb of sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind, is well illustrated by the rapidity with which, in an Indian bazar, a few words of alarm take root, throw out their branches, and develop their fruits. In five minutes, nay, less, it was all over the town, passing from mouth to mouth, gathering intensity as it went, that something dreadful was to happen, no one knew what—no one could tell his neighbour what calamity threatened him, but he could only warn him there was some catastrophe approaching.

The utter absence of all foundation for the rumours only increased the gravity of their nature, for every thing was left to the imagination. There was a hubbub and a buzz of clattering tongues, that swelled and swelled till it filled the very air and penetrated the bungalows of the European officers.

In his chair of office sat Major Tickli, cantonment magistrate, dispensing justice.

He had just concluded the investigation in a case which had occupied two or three hours.

The evening before, Muddo Khan, a police constable, wishing to entertain a party of friends, had called at the shop of a bunneea or shopkeeper named Hulwae and requested him to give him two rupees' worth of sweetmeats. No coin was tendered and the shopkeeper refused to accommodate the constable. He threatened. The confectioner defied.

Muddoo Khan went away. That night after his friends had left him, which was about ten o'clock, he called another policeman to accompany him to the house of Hulwae, where he said he had certain information that some stolen property, the police had been some time in search for, was concealed. The stolen property, which consisted of a little jewellery, or at least articles that resembled it, was found in the very place Muddoo Khan knew it would be found, for he had sent and had put it there. Hulwae was taken away to the lock-up, and his hands being tied behind his back, a brass vessel (called a lota) full of wasps, was fastened on his stomach, and he was informed that it would remain in that position till he confessed before a magistrate.* Indian wasps are like some human beings you occasionally meet with, easily irritated, and their sting is very sharp. The first pang the prisoner felt when the poisoned shafts pene-

* A process occasionally resorted to by the police, and recommended by its simplicity.

trated the skin, he bore manfully, the second weakened his resolution, the third caused him to cry out, at the fourth he begged to be released and he would confess all—anything his tormentors wanted. He was released, and the instrument of torture taken off. Begging a little cold water to relieve the burning pain, he sat down in a corner of the hut, where he was confined, all the morning. About eight o'clock his wife, who knew too well the fate that had befallen her lord, brought him some food. She was glad to escape with abuse to avoid blows, and Hulwae, with his stomach empty inside, and swollen with the wasps' stings on the outside, was taken before Major Tickli, who after trying the case, upon the prisoner's own confession, found him guilty, and had just sentenced him to two years' imprisonment and thirty lashes, when there was a little excitement outside, and in came a mutsuddie, or native clerk from the kotwallee, looking very important and bearing in his hand a document written in Oordoo in the usual Persian character. This turned out to be a letter or report from the kotwal to the cantonment magistrate, to the effect that there was a panic through the whole town, the bunneeahs were closing their shops, burying their money and jewels, and sending their families out of the place.

Major Tickli ordered his buggy and adjourned

the court. Rumour in India resembles carbonic acid gas or malaria-laden air. It first of all creeps along the ground and then ascends. There is this difference, certainly, that whereas the gas or the disease-laden atmosphere loses by degrees its noxious properties by mixing with a purer atmosphere, and so becomes diluted, rumour, on the other hand, generally gathers intensity as it ascends. So it was, that by the time the report set on foot by Gopal Chunder had reached the ears of the European officers, it had gained rather than lost in strength.

Colonel Macdare, after a while, recovered his mental equilibrium so far as to be able to go on with his breakfast; but he had hardly recommenced before the noise of wheels was heard outside, and shortly after the voice of some one asking for the Commissioner Sahib, when in walked Captain Johnson, the Deputy Commissioner.

"I know what you've come about," said the Colonel, anticipating his visitor. "You have seen the paper."

"No, I've seen no paper; at least I've seen nothing in the paper, but I have heard reports that rather astonished me."

"Astonished you, I should think they had. Read that," and the Colonel handed him the paper.

Now, Johnson, though the Colonel's sub-

ordinate officer, and in most respects very much the Colonel's inferior, was, nevertheless, better able than his chief to solve a certain kind of riddle, for you see Johnson had been several years secretary to the Secret Committee of the Indian Circumlocution Office. Whether it was that he applied the experience there gained to the matter in hand, or whether it was that his own depraved nature suggested the idea to his mind, or whether it was that he had known a similar thing done before, I cannot tell. All I know is that he immediately said to the Colonel four words—

“I see, it all.”

“You do!” replied the Colonel, jumping up from his seat. “It is more than I do. What on earth does it mean? Why do they send this regiment down here from Budgepore? Talk of disturbances in the district! why a child in arms might walk through it from end to end and not hear so much as a mouse squeak.”

This was a forcible simile, but the fact was the Colonel was so much excited that the incongruity of a child in arms walking about the Mirichpoor district never occurred to him.

“You see,” said Johnson, “this is how it is. They wanted, for some reason or other, to send this regiment away from Budgepore. Mirichpoor was pitched upon; why, of course, I cannot say. Well, having ordered it away in

a hurry, people began to talk, and it was necessary to make out there was some reason for the move. So a line is sent off to the editor of the *Sycophant*, who is kept by the Government to do their dirty work, and this is the result. They think Mirichpoor, being a long way off, and — the Commissioner being a — a military man, and holding his berth *dum se bene gesserit*, the affair will never come out."

"They think so, do they?" said Colonel Macdare, starting from his chair again and pacing angrily up and down the room. "They think so, do they? I'll tell you what, Johnson, if this is as you say, and I dare say you're right, I'll expose them; I'll track them down, the defamers of my district, I'll track them down, I'll make them confess their lie before the world. I'll worry them, I will by—"

Colonel Macdare didn't swear, and he stopped himself short ere the word passed his lips; but the vow he registered in his own mind was the result of a determined will, just as likely of fulfilment as if he had sealed it with an oath.

Here their colloquy was interrupted by the noise of wheels and the entry almost immediately afterwards of Major Tickli and then of Colonel Drew, commanding the 150th, then quartered at Mirichpoor. And to make a long story short, I may as well state, that within half an hour very nearly all the European officers,

civil and military, stationed at Mirichpoor, were assembled in the Commissioner's room, all of course in high dudgeon as soon as they heard that there was not a word of truth in the report, although several of them went away impressed with the idea, that although the Commissioner and his own subordinate officer strongly denied the existence of any foundation for the report, this was only an official white lie, a statement put forward to allay excitement and deceive the public.

As soon as his visitors had left, Colonel Macdare began to open his morning's letters, and the first of which he broke the seal, ran as follows:—

No. 791.

Camp, Humble-bumble, April 21st, 18—.

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF MIRICHPOOR.

SIR,—I have the honor to report that in accordance with instructions from Army Head Quarters the regiment under my command, strength as per margin, marched from Budgepore on the 7th instant in progress towards Mirichpoor.

According to the route furnished me from the Quartermaster-General's office and my instructions from Army Head Quarters, I ought to reach the Mirichpoor district on the 6th May, and shall halt at the places mentioned in the

margin on the dates specified; and I have to solicit the favour of your giving the necessary orders for supplies to be collected at each halting ground, in accordance with the indent which I have the honour to enclose.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedt. servt.,

ALEXANDER GOTOBED, *Lieut. Col.*,

Commanding 78th N.I.

P.S.—I have had no instructions to proceed by forced marches, but should the disturbed state of the country render it advisable for me to do so, I beg that you will intimate the same to me, when I will leave the heavy baggage and the sick behind, and push forward in light marching order.

Colonel Macdare threw the letter No. 791, with enclosure, on the floor, and ground his heel into the paper. He then wrote to the editor of the *Sycophant* a letter, which he desired that functionary to insert in his next issue. It was as follows:—

To the Editor of the "Sycophant."

SIR,—I observe in your last issue a statement put forward, as if by authority, to the effect that the 78th Regiment N.I. has been ordered peremptorily from Budgepore to Mirich-

poor, in consequence of the disturbed condition of that district. What may be the reason of ordering the 78th N.I. at this season so suddenly to make a long march, I know not, nor do I care; but to the explanation of that move, as set forth by you, I give the most unqualified denial. There is not, nor has there been, during the last two years, the slightest appearance of any discontent, nor the least apprehension of any disturbance in the district.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK MACDARE,
Commissioner of Mirichpoor.

This letter threw the editor of the *Sycophant* into a fever, and for several days he hovered between life and death. What should he do? If he refused it, the writer would assuredly find some other channel to convey the truth to the public; and his own refusal would look bad, as a clear attempt to burke the truth. If he published it, what would Government say,—what would be Mr. Byewilwuffa's feelings,—what Mr. Khas Mouza's,—what Colonel Donothing's, the Quartermaster-General? Nay, might not even the serenity of the halls of Olympus be disturbed, and the Governor General himself enraged? He suffered dreadfully in the attack, became delirious, and fancied that the Quartermaster-General, enraged at having something

to do, was perpetually measuring him with a large wheel,—first from head to foot, and then back again; while Mr. Byewilwuffa and Mr. Khas Mouza heaped piles of correspondence, in foolscap, on his head.

Colonel Macdare's letter was, however, sent in duplicate to the *Mofussilite*, where of course it appeared; and then the people began to wonder what in the world the 78th N.I. had been ordered to Mirichpoor for.

I don't suppose that anything would have transpired in consequence of the letter in the *Mofussilite*; had not Colonel Macdare, with that energy and iron will for which he was famed, followed it up by official correspondence, addressed in the first instance to Mr. Byewilwuffa, that is, of course, to his secretary. In vain the usual means were resorted to,—delays, obstructions, difficulties, references, objections; and in vain did Mr. Khas Mouza pile Pelion upon Ossa, red tape upon foolscap, even as in the editor's feverish dreams,—all to no purpose. Colonel Macdare tossed it off, as if it were flakes of snow accumulating upon a beaver hat. He fought the paper war (and he could fight paper fights as well as real battles with cold steel and gunpowder) with as much desperation as if he was charging at the head of his old regiment. Bred in the best school of Indian military statesmanship, he could wield his pen as well as his sword.

He felt his honour at stake, and he was determined to fight it out to the last, even as once in Afghanistan, when deserted by his picket in a *sunga*, he put his back against the stone wall and set his teeth, and kept at bay twenty of the enemy for at least a quarter of an hour, till succour came. But if Colonel Macdare was a dangerous foe when on the defensive, it was a much more serious matter when he assumed the offensive, as he did in this instance. Nor had he contemptible opponents. For Mr. Byewilwuffa and Mr. Khas Mouza were no mean foes, when the weapons wielded in the fight were red tape and steel pen. Colonel Macdare, in a very early stage of the conflict, saw enough to confirm the impression raised in his mind by Captain Johnson's suggestion as to the real history of the move of the 78th N.I., and the paragraph in the *Sycophant*; and he was resolved to worm out the truth through all the turnings and twistings of the circumlocution office, and to force from the offending department, whichever it might be, as it were at the point of the sword, a confession that the slur passed on his district was unfounded. You see he attempted a task which may fairly be regarded as Herculean in its nature, while the attempt itself was Quixotic; for he assailed a foe much larger than himself by a great many times, than the windmill against which the knight rode was taller and bigger than

its assailant. Single-handed and alone, Colonel Macdare attacked the departments of the Indian Government. Well might the gods pause in their avocations in Olympus, and regard the combat with attention.

The editor of the *Sycophant*, as soon as he recovered from the fever into which he had been thrown by the excitement which Colonel Macdare's letter caused him, wrote a reply to that officer, saying that it was impossible for him to insert the contradiction; indeed, it was no longer necessary to do so, as it had appeared in other papers, but that his information was derived from official sources, and there could be no doubt as to its correctness.

Now, the editor was very ill advised to write in this style. But the fact is, he had no more idea of Colonel Macdare's character, than he had of the habits and customs of the people who live in the moon. He thought the imposing nature of the assurance, and the grand words "official sources," would at once silence his opponent, and that he should hear nothing more about it. Unhappy man! This assurance from the editor of the *Sycophant* was all that Colonel Macdare wanted. He was now thoroughly excited; his blood was warm, and his spirit aroused. He literally clapped his hands together, in token of triumphant joy, when the editor's ill-advised epistle reached him.

"Now I have them," he muttered between his set teeth; "now I have them."

I cannot tell you what trouble Colonel Macdare caused by this war with the Departments. Secretaries swore when they heard his name mentioned, and clerks in the offices, even the chuprassees, grinned when they saw the well-known "Mirichpoor Commissioner's Office" stamped on the corner of the official envelope. Correspondence clerks were increased in all the English sections of the different departments; there was actually an excess in the budget that year, in the miscellaneous item of foolscap paper, owing to this tremendous war. And all because of what the old song says:—

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"

and because Mrs. Wasilbakee would not go to the exhibition choir, when Mrs. Fileeter played the accompaniment.

I may as well conclude the history of this little episode while I am on the subject. But you must not imagine that this war was ended at the period the events occurred which form the subject of this chronicle. Oh, no! The Budgepore Exhibition passed away; even Colonel Gotobed's mortal remains mingled with their parent dust ere this war was finished. But I may as well relate the conclusion of it here, merely pausing to remark, that when the

78th N. I. came to within five marches of Mirichpoor, by which time it was the 12th of May, it was deemed better not to let the corps complete its march in the teeth of Colonel Macdare's vigorous declaration, that no troops were wanted, and there being no particular place to send it to, it was ordered by telegram to march to Lahore, at which place it arrived about the 10th of June, and there it remained in camp till the September following, when it was ordered back to Budgepore.

Armed with the information supplied by the indiscreet editor of the *Sycophant*, Colonel Macdare first attacked Mr. Khas Mouza. Mr. Khas Mouza referred him to the military authorities, as the department that was concerned with the movement of troops. The letter of Colonel Macdare and the reply of Mr. Khas Mouza, after reference to Mr. Byewilwuffa, were then sent to the Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, and by him returned in due course, with the reply that His Excellency had nothing to do with the movement of troops: reference should be made to the Government of India. The correspondence then went to the Military Secretary to the Government of India, and was by him returned with a reply, directing reference to the Quartermaster-General. The whole correspondence then came before the Quartermaster-General,

who was quite taken by surprise at finding himself with something to do, and dictated a reply to the effect that reference had better be made to the Government of India in the Foreign Department. Accordingly, the correspondence went to the Secretary of the Foreign Department, who sent it back with a letter, saying it had nothing to do with that office; reference should be made to the Adjutant-General. Up to the Adjutant-General it then went next, who was so shocked at correspondence coming to him direct, without having gone through any of the usual channels, that he was ill and incapacitated for business for a whole week. However, at the end of that time, he dictated a very severe letter to Colonel Macdare, and returned the whole correspondence to him, devoutly wishing that Colonel Macdare was a regimental officer, so that his wig might take effect.

The correspondence, which by this time had grown to rather large dimensions, then went back to the Military Secretary to the Government of India, who returned it again. Finally, Colonel Macdare forwarded it to the Military Secretary to the Governor-General, who brought it to the notice of His Excellency. It required four stout Government House lackeys to bring the massive pile of foolscap in, and put it on the table before His Excellency.

The massive pile of foolscap, however, that

required four men to carry it, did not by any means represent a tithe of the correspondence that had taken place about this case. These were only the official letters that passed between Colonel Macdare and heads of the different departments. For every one that was here, there were at least a hundred official letters written from one department to the other, and as for the demi-officials, no one could number them. You may get a little idea of this correspondence from the fact told me by Chillan, who you recollect succeeded Major Soosti as Postmaster-General, that although the burden on the state for the conveyance in mail carts, &c., of this enormous correspondence was so great, that the mail-carts and runners had to be doubled, and an extra set of bags made up for every office, which cost ten annas six pie each, yet the postages for the demi-officials, which were stamped of course, covered the whole expenditure.

The correspondence, at length, having reached the Governor-General, that functionary examined it, and the result of his examination was a pencil memorandum to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, as follows:—

“78th N. I. marched from Budgepore to Mirichpore April, 18—; look for the order, and see why.”

When the Military Secretary to Government

received this pencilled memorandum, he had a search made for the old records in his office. They were found, and it then appeared that the move of the 78th N. I. had been ordered on a recommendation to that effect from Budgepore. The result was duly communicated to the Governor-General, who directed the Military Secretary to address the Budgepore Government on the subject, and ascertain the grounds of the recommendation.

But Colonel Macdare had carried the war into a region with which he was altogether unacquainted. As a military commander, he never would have committed so great a blunder as to invade a territory strange and unknown to him, or to lead his men over ground which was full of pitfalls hidden from the sight. By means of that vast system of under-currents which is ever in motion beneath the surface of life in India, everything of importance connected with the *personnel* of Government becomes known all over the country in a marvellously short space of time. That Colonel Macdare was in disgrace with the authorities, that he was regarded as an intolerable nuisance, a thorn in the side of every secretary, every head of a department, was a fact much better known to all the heads of native society in Mirichpoor than to the Colonel himself. He, indeed, was ignorant of it, for he never gave the matter

a thought, and he forgot that during his official life as ruler of Mirichpoor, he had necessarily made enemies of many powerful and influential men, who hated him because he had detected them in malpractices, and who feared him, while in power. That the day would ever come when the long pent-up spirit of revenge which these men harboured in their bosoms would find vent, was an idea that had never once occurred to him. Not that it would have made any difference to him if it had. He did what he had done from a sense of duty, and no consideration of personal risk would have deterred him from the course. The Asiatic who thirsts for revenge never grows weary of waiting. If an opportunity is slow in coming, "leave it to time and to me," he says to himself, and goes on watching.

After the reference to the Budgepore Government, all official record of the war with the departments becomes lost to view. Up to this time the casualties had been two secretaries driven home on medical certificate, one writer committed suicide, ten invalided, and 40 dâk horses killed from over work.

One day people were surprised by the announcement of a sudden change in the administration of Mirichpoor. A gentleman, by name Rubbee, was appointed to the post of Deputy Commissioner, Captain Johnson having been

removed to make room for him. There was a new settlement to be made shortly, and this was the reason alleged for Mr. Rubbee's appointment. It was not very long after this that sinister reports began to be whispered about, that all was not right in the Commissioner's office, and as these reports, vague at first, and undefined, began to assume shape, they would call forth the remark from those who heard them, "Who would have thought it?" "I'll never believe it," "No, no, Colonel Macdare is not the man to do that,"—others would shake their heads and say it was a very serious matter, all of which tended to show that either Colonel Macdare had been doing something he ought not, or that people said he had been doing something he ought not. Colonel Macdare himself knew nothing, for no one liked, of course, to mention to him the reports that were abroad. Still, there was an uncomfortable chilly feeling about the social atmosphere of Mirichpoor society. No one seemed to be quite at home with his neighbour. The only man who was universally popular was Rubbee, and he kept almost open house, gave large shooting-parties to the officers in the district, and had a dinner-party once or twice a week, at which champagne flowed freely, and where you were sure to meet every one in the covenanted services in turn, but never Colonel

Macdare. If the Commissioner's name was mentioned, Rubbee would look mysterious, perhaps shrug his shoulders, and beg that his name mightn't be mentioned, he didn't wish *it* talked about. Now, that little word "it" was a word of marvellous significance. There they stood, those two little letters by themselves, yet what did they not imply! He did not wish "it" talked about.

What? Ah, that was the question; but then, you see, nobody ventured to ask, and so nobody got an answer.

After a short time Mrs. Rubbee joined her husband, and proved quite as general a favourite with both sexes as Rubbee had been with his own. Now Mirichpoor became more gay than ever; balls and dances followed the dinner-parties, and pic-nics took the place of the shooting excursions, at which all the ladies joined, but Colonel Macdare was never seen at any of them. Still, with all this show of gaiety and cheerfulness, there was a general impression that everything was not right, though what was wrong no one could have told you.

All this time Colonel Macdare kept up the war with the departments as he could. But as his official letters ceased to awaken any response, he referred the matter home, where he was known to have considerable influence with the Court of Directors.

At last it came—the crash—the electric fluid with which the social atmosphere had been so long laden developed itself, and Mr. Rubbee presented himself at the Commissioner's with an order to take over the office, for Colonel Macdare was suspended upon charges of corruption. Then followed the explosion, the lightning came first and the thunder afterwards.

"I always knew there was something wrong in that quarter," said one.

"No man ever keeps himself aloof as the Colonel has done from his fellow kind when his hands are clean," said another.

"I hear he was very unkind to his wife," said a third, a lady speaking this time.

"Yes, they have not lived together since I have been at Mirichpoor," answered her friend.

Rubbee didn't object to Colonel Macdare being discussed now at his dinner-table, and he was discussed. And it was marvellous how acute was the knowledge of human nature possessed by all who met there, for there was not one of them, either man or woman, who had not known all along that Colonel Macdare's hands were not clean, only, of course, it was nobody's business to report it. They all knew it, every one, and they all knew it

would come out some day, and so, you see, it had.

A special commission sat, consisting of three officers, two of them being civilians and the third a military officer, to investigate the charges which Rubbee brought forward. Colonel Macdare, of course, attended, and much was he astonished at the evidence that was adduced. Six mahajuns (money-lenders and bankers) whom he had known well for years, and who, he was aware, bore him no good will for reasons already hinted at, produced their books and showed items in them of large sums paid to Colonel Macdare at different times. These entries were, it is true, not in the regular row of entries, but apart, sometimes in the corner of a page, sometimes at the bottom, sometimes at the side, but as mahajuns' books are not ruled, nor are their pages numbered like an English ledger, it is obvious that an entry may be made in any part of the page at any time, and no one ever dreams, of course, of doubting an entry in a mahajun's book! They are known to regard their "books" as imbued with a certain degree of sanctity, and so, of course, it is not to be supposed for a moment they would ever tamper with them. In addition to which, Mr. Xerxes DeSouza, head clerk in Colonel Macdare's office, and now, of course, in Mr.

Rubbee's '(for every one knew that Rubbee would succeed Colonel Macdare), deposed to having several times seen natives come after nightfall to Colonel Macdare's house with bags of money and go away without them.

Colonel Macdare had brought up Xerxes from childhood, he being the son of one of the bandsmen of his old regiment. He had married a pretty Irish maid of Mrs. Macdare's, and the Colonel had settled the new-married couple comfortably in a little house in his own compound, and had supplied them with many comforts, nay, even luxuries, so that DeSouza was looked upon with much envy and with a good deal of respect, too, by his former associates, over whose head, by his patron's favour, he rapidly rose. The eldest son the Colonel had settled in life, but after the birth of her third child Mrs. DeSouza died, and he, alas, took to drinking to drown his sorrow, or perhaps under the influence of that mental reactionary excitement which often follows sudden emotion or any great blow, and which in little minds or minds weakly sustained by moral or religious principle, is not unapt to develop such a vice as drinking. One by one the articles of furniture, the pictures, the little comforts that had adorned his once happy home, were pawned in the bazaar, and several times the Colonel had to warn him, and at last to threaten him that he would be

dismissed if he did not mend his ways. This alarmed DeSouza, for he knew the Colonel was a man of his word, and he became, outwardly at any rate, more respectable and more attentive to his duties. Only the last hot season he had been attacked with cholera, and owed his life to the care with which the Colonel looked after him, and in the crisis of the disease personally superintended the operations that resulted in his recovery. When he was making his statement about the bags of money being brought to the house, Colonel Macdare looked him full in the face, steadily and fixedly, but DeSouza carefully kept his eyes turned the other way, and I don't suppose he would have met the glance of that quiet, calm grey eye, for the whole world. After he had been dismissed from his attendance at the court that day he went home and got very drunk. Seldom indeed, afterwards, was he seen sober. At last he fell into *delirium tremens*, and in that condition died. The state of his mind in his last moments was, as it was described to me, something dreadful. I would rather not relate it here, as such details are always painful.

Colonel Macdare must have seen how things would end, for he wrote to his wife, who was about to join him just when this affair took place, not to come, but she had started before the letter reached her; so he desired her to

await him at Bombay. He was removed from his appointment immediately the report of the special commission was sent up.

India is supposed to be a great field for friendship. Doubtless the accidents and circumstances of Indian life do serve to foster the plant which, indigenous in every land, yet somehow I cannot help fancying, grows more healthily in our own cold, phlegmatic clime. Rapid development is generally unaccompanied by soundness of constitution. You make your friends in India on board ship, at the club, or the cricket ground, or the racecourse, or as you work your guns side by side in the trenches. You lead to the altar and swear lifelong fidelity to the girl you have met four times in your life, perhaps five, and whom you may have seen once for a short time apart from the society of others. Your children scarce learn to lisp "papa," when they are taken from you; and when you next meet them, are coarse rough school boys, or young men setting out in life, or young ladies thinking of their love affairs, and when they will be married. Your bosom friend, your chum as you call him, is one morning taken ill, and the next taken to his last home; and you go to his auction, and chat pleasantly with your brother officers, and his—but yesterday—handling the different articles put up for sale, or discussing their worth with a heartless indifference; and

you bid for his saddle and watch with as much *nonchalance* as if they were being sold in their maker's shop. Surely it was in India these lines were penned :—

“Sleep, soldier! though many regret thee
 Who stand by thy cold bier to-day ;
 Soon, soon shall the kindest forget thee,
 And thy name from the earth pass away.
 The man thou didst love as a brother
 A friend in thy place will have gained ;
 Thy dog shall keep watch for another,
 And thy steed by a stranger be reined.”

I say surely these lines were written in India.
 Perhaps what follows were not :—

“But though hearts that now mourn for thee
 sadly
 Soon joyous as ever shall be ;
 Though thy bright orphan boy may laugh
 gladly
 As he sits on some comrade's knee :
 There is one who shall still pay the duty
 Of tears for the true and the brave,
 As when first in the bloom of her beauty
 She wept o'er her soldier's grave.”

You will excuse my quoting these few lines. I do not often quote poetry ; and these are, to my thinking, some of the most beautiful and most touching that ever were penned.

It is, I think, partly owing to the large field over which the flowers of friendship have to bloom in this country that their colours so soon

fade and petals fall off. Here to-day and away to-morrow, might be our motto. We have not time to link our souls with others in such close union as shall defy the hand of time or the rough blows of adversity. And there is all throughout our Indian life a want of depth of thought, which is striking to the new comer, but which speedily grows upon and infects the mind. The ball room, the billiard room, the band, and the tittle-tattle of the drawing room, tiffins, kettle-drums, or picnics, and large dinner parties, alternating with the drudgery of official duties, go far to make up our life.

There is, besides, among us, little of that domestic happiness,—the social circle, the family ties, the reciprocal calls upon brotherly and sisterly affection; the watching and tending of declining years of parents in their old age; the strong associations of locality in places where we have lived all our lives, and our fathers before us, and which invest every feature of the scene with a halo of fond memories; the companionship of school and college days, ripening ere the interests of life have broken up the even surface of the soul, to sow it with the seeds of care;—there is little or none of all this that, together, makes the soil where friendship blooms in healthy maturity in our own beloved land. But in place of it we have the race of life, official zeal and rivalry, constant change of scene and

of companions, the glitter of a gay world, with as little permanence in its colours as the bloom on the wing of a butterfly, giddy moments of shallow happiness, loud laughter and boisterous song, or gentle tones and fleeting blushes, music, flowers, champagne, and flirting!

If you want to know the value of tropical friendship, you may see it tested at times in India. When a crow or a rabbit falls into adversity, its comrades in the one case pick out its feathers, and then pick its flesh off its bones; and in the other, gnaw, and bite, and torment, till they have ridded themselves of the society of one bad mannered enough to be unfortunate. If Darwin be correct, we may all be descended from crows. If it is so, it is curious how often you find cases where the moral development and deflection from the original type has been so small.

Colonel Macdare was a sick crow. He gave no dinner parties now. Rubbee did, and Rubbee's champagne was good, and Mrs. Rubbee was pretty, engaging, clever, lady-like, and charming.

Colonel Macdare was under a cloud. It would have been troublesome to have examined into the truth of the charges,—no one had time for that; and, truth to tell, no one had the moral courage to stand up before the world and say, "I don't believe in them." So his old friends

avoided him, or, if forced to meet him, spoke under constraint, and as if they felt it would be a relief to be away from his presence. The native gentry, who had formerly been so glad to cultivate his acquaintance, were careful never to let their equipages be seen standing at his door; and the ladies who in former days had danced so gaily at his parties, before Mrs. Macdare went to England, turned their heads the other way, when they passed him on the road. His house and effects were sold by public auction, and bought, most of them, by Rubbee; and one evening, accompanied by his only faithful friend, his dog, he got into his palkee and set out on a long journey to Bombay.

He never lived to reach it, and Mrs. Macdare returned to England a widow. Colonel Macdare was found one day by a traveller in a dak bungalow between Mirichpoor and Bombay in a dying state. He was speechless and scarcely sensible, and the dog that was sitting by his master's bedside looking wistfully in his face, could give no particulars. There were no servants attached to the bungalow, as is the custom in those parts, and not a soul about the place but the palkee bearers, who said the sahib had been taken ill the night before, and was almost speechless when they reached the wretched shelter where the traveller found him. He attended the dying man to the last, and did

what he could to minister to his wants, but that was, alas, but little. He never spoke, but as the lamp of life flickered for an instant on the confines of two worlds, a peaceful smile stole over his handsome features, and ere the soul left its tenement, a gleam of light shot across his dull, grey eye, and there was an instant or two of consciousness, but no strength to speak. He turned his head, and looked wistfully at the well-known face of his dog; then he looked at the traveller, who was bending over him, holding his cold, lifeless hand. At that moment, a glance of recognition passed between the two men, and the traveller's heart beat wildly, and then sank again, as he saw before him the wasted, emaciated form, and pain-worn countenance of the once dashing sabreur, the staunch friend, the acute statesman, the upright, uncompromising, Christian soldier, Colonel Macdare. He pressed his hand, and the dying man feebly returned the sign. A smile lit up his countenance, and, though he was too weak to speak, the altered expression of his features told as well as if he had said it in words, that it was pleasing to him to feel the grasp of a true friend at the last moment. The next he was gone—without a struggle. The traveller with a sigh closed his eyes, and then observed for the first time that the dead man's left hand, for it was his right he had held, grasped a book. He

took it up, and extricated it with a little difficulty, for the fingers clenched it tightly, stiffening in death. The page was thumb-worn, as if the book had been a long time open at that place. The Colonel, perhaps, had been struggling to realize its contents, and had had a hard task to do so. At any rate, a pencil-mark under one of the verses showed where the reader's eye and mind had been chiefly directed. It was at the words,—“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

The traveller could not remain in that lonely place. So, with the assistance of the palkee bearers, and his own servant, he dug a grave under a tree in the compound, as deep as he possibly could make it; and there at sunset he laid the body of the Colonel, and piled a huge heap of large stones over the spot, to secure, as well as to mark it. In vain he tried to induce the dog to leave it; nothing could succeed. There the creature sat, faithful unto death, till, as the moon rose on that melancholy scene, the traveller, with a heart full of sadness, set out on his long journey back again, for he had to hasten down to Bombay, to soften the terrible blow that was about to fall on the poor widow.

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THE BUDGEPORE EXHIBITION.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRIZE COMMITTEE.

AT last, the exhibition began to draw towards completion. The building constructed under Sleeper's auspices and supervision with railway material and labour, was now nearly roofed in, and intending exhibitors began to flock down in considerable numbers to the spot. There was a guard of police at the gate which led into the grounds, who exacted a fee of from four to eight annas from every native who went in; and the consequence was, that the place was not overcrowded, because no native went there unless he had some article to exhibit, or some real object to be gained by going. Isteefa, who had come to Budgepore as joint magistrate in place of Fitzmisl, was Honorary Secretary to the Exhibition Committee, and, of course, having no

time to devote to anything else, was placed on special duty, by the Honourable Mr. Bywilwuffa's orders, leaving his legitimate duties unperformed. But as the time drew near, and the labour of despatching, receiving, and arranging the articles was really very heavy, it was found impossible for one officer, or two, or half-a-dozen, to get through the whole work. It became necessary, therefore, to strike off twenty officers altogether, covenanted and uncovenanted, for this especial duty. Some of these were judges; some judges of small cause courts, some magistrates, some assistants, some deputy magistrates and collectors,—in short, it was an *omnium gatherum* of officials, who, under the orders of Mr. Bywilwuffa, were not sorry to desert the daily routine of their office work to look after the great exhibition. Some of these were struck off duty two months before the opening, some one month before. All this time, of course, cases remained undecided, prisoners were detained in close confinement in the hawallats, or lock-up, and miscellaneous matters of a thousand different kinds, such as occupy the attention of every Indian official, but utterly baffle categorizing, on account of their diverse and miscellaneous character, remained unattended to pretty well all over the province.

My friend, Mr. Archimedes DeCruze was in

luck's way. Having Dakhil Duftar's interest to push him on, he very easily got appointed to a post in the exhibition, where the principal arrangement of the different articles was left in his hands.

Determined to carry out my experiment to the end, I despatched Selim with a box containing a very pretty model of a Swiss cottage, for which I had written home to France, when the idea first developed itself in my mind. This I labelled a "bungalow," knowing that it would pass muster very well for a model of an improved style of Indian dwelling-house.

I dare say it would amuse you were I to detail all the adventures that Selim went through the day he took the model down to the exhibition. I know that he took away twenty rupees with him, and expended every one, and even then he said he had a hard fight to get his model in. But I had given him strict orders that he was not only to get his model in, but to get it put in a good place, that is in front, where it could be seen, and not buried behind a heap of rubbishy things. For this, however, that is, for allotting him a decent place for his model to stand in, he had to pay my friend, Mr. Archimedes, five rupees. I made a rough calculation, after I had seen the number of articles there, of how much Mr. DeCruze must have netted in this little business, and I came to the

conclusion that it could not have been a farthing under five thousand rupees. But the exhibition was intended to develop industry, and if that was not a development of industry, it was certainly a development of genius.

The most remarkable development of genius, however, was in the case of the Honourable Mr. Byewilwuffa himself, who could not see any reason why, when exhibitions are popular institutions in England, France and America, where they can be elaborated and conducted by the people, they should not be equally successful in India where there were none but the official classes to work out the idea and that at the sacrifice of their legitimate duties.

At last the matter had progressed so far that it became necessary to appoint judges and committees to decide upon the prizes, and this was not an easy thing to do. At least it was not difficult to find the committee, because one committee of three were capable of sitting upon half a dozen different classes of articles successively, but the difficulty was to find committees who had any knowledge of the subjects upon which they were to exercise their discernment.

I was on a committee with two others, Colonel Moodle and Jackson. Jackson was a young ensign who had just joined the 80th Regiment N. I., which had come to Budgopore in the place of the 78th N. I. ordered, as you recol-

lect, to Mirichpoor. The subjects allotted to our committee to adjudge the prizes on, were as follows:—Raw Produce Department A., Sec. II., Subdivision Y. Elephants, and Fancy Pigeons, and on the morning appointed we met at the grounds.

“I hope you are up in raw produce,” said Colonel Moodle as we met, and walked up to the exhibition building, “because I really am totally ignorant of the subject.”

“Well, there are certainly some kinds of raw produce that I should not consider it beyond my province to pass an opinion upon, but what particular species or kinds of raw produce we may have to examine I don’t know.”

Most fortunately for us, we found Mr. Alsorts at the building ready to afford us his assistance. Mr. Alsorts was an intelligent member of the mercantile community of Budgepore, of the firm of Alsorts, Sizes and Co., who dealt principally in country produce. He had been very active in assisting the promoters of the exhibition, and, in fact, had made himself generally useful, having found his reward for unremitting zeal and a great sacrifice of his time by being taken a good deal of notice of by Dakhil Duftar and Istcefa, whom he used when speaking of them to other people after this period, to call by their surnames, thereby inducing the belief in the minds of persons otherwise ignorant, that

these gentlemen were personal and intimate friends of his. He was a member of the central committee, and exhibited a large number of articles, particularly in the department of raw produce, himself.

"Good-morning, Mr. Alsorts," I said, "I am glad to find you here. You will help us, I dare say, to understand a little about these matters. We are the committee on country produce; Department A., isn't it, Moodie?"

"Yes," said the Colonel, referring to a ticket he had with him. "Department A., Sect. II., Subdivision Y., that's what it is, and there are pigeons and elephants besides."

"Walk this way, gentlemen, if you please," said Alsorts, just as if he was in a shop. "I shall have much pleasure in showing you the department."

So we followed him till we came to a part of the building which was filled with what looked to me like a great heap of the agglomerate you expect to find upon a spot indicated by a tall post and a board with the words, "Rubbish may be shot here."

Here, however, all the component parts of the agglomerate were arranged in an imposing manner.

I put on a very learned look, and determined to turn my attention to two things, the first

was to pick Mr. Alsort's brains, and the second to avoid making a fool of myself.

"This, gentlemen," said Alsorts, attracting our attention to a large mass of what looked like a quantity of string frayed out into its original tow; "this, gentlemen, is the department of fibres, perhaps the most interesting department in the whole exhibition. Now you see this fibre, examine it, gentlemen; you see how strong it is, how coarse looking. Yet, gentlemen, it is capable of being worked up into the most beautiful fabric something between cambric and silk, but of a far finer texture and much more durable than either. And yet, gentlemen, this fibre is so common in India that you can get it in any quantity for a farthing a pound. One pound will make, when worked up—here I will show you—a simple arithmetical calculation"—showing us with a pencil on a piece of paper—"you see, one pound will work up into one piece of twenty yards. Now it couldn't sell by any possibility under a rupee a yard. So, you see, how profitable the discovery will be."

"That it will, indeed," said Colonel Moodle, much struck with the idea. "I almost wonder you don't work it yourself or start a company."

Jackson, who had hitherto not spoken, here remarked, "Deuced like old tow."

This was all he said, but we at once adjudged the prize in fibres to Mr. Alsorts.

He took us then to the next branch of raw produce, and showed us a kind of earth, or what looked like common earth, but was in reality, as he explained to us, earth possessing such a large proportion of aluminum that you could manufacture a set of a dozen spoons and forks out of a spadeful of it. This valuable earth was also so common in India that you could get a cartful in any bazaar for a shilling.

"I had no idea," said Colonel Moodie, "that there was such wealth in India. Only think of making spoons and forks out of that stuff! Why, it looks for all the world like common mutti (earth). I suppose you have already realized a large fortune, Mr. Alsorts, by these profitable discoveries of yours?" Mr. Alsorts shook his head with a knowing look and a peculiar smile, such as a man adopts when he wants to convey the idea that he has not made such a bad thing of it.

"These," he added, directing our attention to a number of ores, "are ores of iron, silver, nickel, platinum, and gold, all of which have been tested and found to be of the best quality. These ores have all been dug out of the Budgepore hills; were a company to start and work the mines, they could not make less than three hundred per cent."

"How I wish I had a little spare cash to invest in some of these things," said Colonel Moodle. "This country's a perfect El Dorado, if you only knew how to set about getting the gold out of it. Only to think of all this wealth lying under our very feet as it were!"

"This, gentlemen," continued the indefatigable Mr. Alsorts, showing us another kind of fibre, "is a substance so common in India that any quantities of it may be obtained anywhere for the expense only of collecting. It is the fibre of neem leaves, and when manufactured in the proper way, develops into the finest cream-laid note paper you ever saw."

"Astonishing!" said Colonel Moodle. "Can you tell us, now, the apparatus that would be necessary. I have a number of neem trees in my compound; I'll certainly set about collecting the leaves."

"The apparatus is expensive," said Alsorts. "In the first place you would require a steam engine, and that would necessitate keeping a European engineer. But if you have any idea, sir, of working the thing, you can command my services, I assure you. As soon as you have procured the steam engine and the engineer, which is the first step, I shall easily be able to run up a building and get the machinery out. I don't suppose it would cost more than 20,000 rupees."

The next thing he showed us was what looked

like a quantity of old sticks chopped up. These we found, on enquiry, were specimens of a kind of wood that elicited a most exquisite dye, something between magenta and mauve, and was so common that you only had to send out a coolie into the jungle to collect it in any quantities.

"It's a most fortunate thing we had Mr. Alsorts to show us all those things, and tell us what they were," remarked Colonel Moodle, as we came away: "otherwise we should inevitably have exposed our ignorance."

We found Jackson, who had no taste for fibres, awaiting us at the elephant ground.

There we were sadly at fault, for neither of us knew in the least what characteristic feature in an elephant constituted excellence. And there was no Mr. Alsorts there to tell us. We had left him among his fibres and his dyes.

"Let us take a turn," I said, "and see what the other committees do. I see there is a committee of native gentlemen there. Depend on it they are occasionally as much at fault as we. We may get a hint from them."

The native committee had been all round, and had just concluded their labours, which were not small; for they consisted in adjudging the prizes on fifteen different kind of articles, mostly domesticated birds, vegetables, &c. Their labour, however, was very much lightened, by an excellent principle they had established for de-

ciding on the respective merits of the various articles submitted to them. The committee, at the head of which was Gunny Lall, first asked if any of the specimens exhibited belonged to the commissioner sahib. If the commissioner sahib was found to have entered the list for public competition, the prize was at once awarded to him. If the commissioner had not, then perhaps the collector sahib had; and in that case, as being next in rank, he was entitled in the second place to the prize. And so it went on all down the ladder, till Mr. Fileeter's successor, the deputy-collector's fat ducks, came into prominent notice, and had the ticket, a little bit of wood, suspended by a string, tied round their necks, indicating that they had reached the highest pinnacle of excellence attainable by mortal ducks, viz., being the best of their kind.

During our walk we came upon Mooltawee, who was standing in the buffalo sheds. His specimen, on which he prided himself, had unhappily not survived. Mooltawee was standing over the prostrate carcass of the deceased buffalo, contemplating the lifeless form with affectionate regard.

"Poor thing," he said pathetically to us, as we came up, pointing to the object on the ground; "I sat up with it all night and gave it gruel and brandy, and five drops of chloroform every two hours, out of a teaspoon, but all to no purpose.

It was just breathing when I got it down here."

The committee, which came up as we were speaking, however, on hearing that the dead buffaloo with five legs belonged to the judge sahib, immediately awarded the prize to it.

"These monstrosities," said I, "seldom live to grow to maturity. There seems to be some stated provision that they should not, lest they should interfere with the symmetry of nature."

"Yes," said Mooltawee; "but I think in this case it was the walnuts."

"Walnuts!"

"Yes; I gave the creature some walnuts yesterday, and I think it just possible they might have disagreed with it."

"Not impossible," I thought to myself; "who ever heard of feeding a buffalo on walnuts! This was one of the experiments in animal economy to which the exhibition had given rise."

The native committee having concluded their labours at the buffalo-shed, we returned, despondingly, to our elephants, who were all standing, wagging their trunks gently to and fro, and winking at us out of their little eyes as if they thoroughly enjoyed the dilemma we were placed in at their expense; they looked so provokingly like each other, there was no possibility of making a selection.

"Which do you think is the best?" I asked

of Jackson, who, as he had been contemplating them a good long time, might, I thought, perhaps have conceived an idea of some sort as to their relative properties.

"Damn'd if I know; they are all so deuced like one another, there's no telling t'other from which."

This was not encouraging. So I turned to Colonel Moodle.

"Which do you think, Colonel, is the best?"

"It is exceedingly difficult," said the Colonel, "to say; I never saw a batch of elephants which all resembled one another so much."

"Suppose we ask the man in charge," I said. "Very often natives, who are accustomed to watch the habits of the creatures, discover virtues and faults which would wholly escape our observation."

This remark having received the assent of my colleagues, I addressed myself to a man, a sort of jemadar-looking person, who appeared to be in charge of the elephant-shed.

"Kon hathe mazboot hai?" (Which is the strongest elephant?) I asked.

"Kya jane—sub hathee mazboot hain," was his reply. (Who knows? all elephants are strong.)

"What does he say?" asked the Colonel.

"He says they are all equally strong."

"We might choose the tallest, then," said the

Colonel. "They look pretty much all of a height, but I dare say the man knows."

"Kon hathee sub se uncha kudd ka hai?" (Which is the tallest?) I asked.

"Sub ka kudd ekhi hai." (They are all the same height) said the man who seemed to deem us so utterly beneath his notice, as scarcely to be worth answering.

"Hem," said the Colonel.

"Suppose we find out their age, and choose the oldest," suggested Jackson. "I have heard elephants live to be two hundred years old sometimes."

"A very good idea," said the Colonel. "But how shall we tell their age?"

"Oh, you can just go round and look at their teeth," said Jackson.

The Colonel looked at the speaker, and then at the elephant in front of him, who was still wagging his trunk to-and-fro, and winking his little eyes, and now flapped his ears, as much as to say, "Come, and look at my teeth if you like."

"I'll ask the jemadar," said I; "perhaps he will be able to tell us. 'Kon hathee sub se bure umur ka hai?' I added, addressing him in Hindustani. (Which elephant is the oldest?)"

"Kyû jane," said the man; "unko malum hoga to hoga." (Who knows? perhaps they know.)

"What does he say?" asked the Colonel.

"He says he doesn't know, but perhaps they know themselves."

"Well, here's one different from the rest, anyhow, without any tusks," said Jackson, pointing out one of the creatures. "I know I've read somewhere that the finest kind of elephants are those without tusks."

"I think I've read that it is the female that has no tusks," said the Colonel.

"Then we shall be all right in selecting this one, in either case," I said.

"How so?" asked the Colonel.

"According to Burns, you know. Don't you recollect he says, speaking of Nature:—

"Her 'prentice hand she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O!"

"But Burns was speaking of young women, not female elephants," objected the Colonel.

"The principle would be the same all throughout nature," I replied. "As we find the human organization perfected in the lovely form of woman, why not seek perfection of elephantine development in the female elephant?"

"Very well, let's have it so," said the Colonel.

"To make sure, we'll ask the jemadar," I said.

"Kon mard aur kon madin hain?" I asked,

pointing to the elephants. (Which are the males, and which the females?)

"Sub madin," said the sulky fellow. (All females.)

"What does he say?" asked the Colonel.

"He says they are all females."

"Hem!" said the Colonel.

"I vote for this one," then said Jackson, pointing to another of the group.

"All right," said the Colonel, "any one you like. But why this one in particular?"

"Because it is the blackest, do you not see how black it is? *It looks as if it had polished its hide with a blacking brush this morning before breakfast."

"Very well, I agree," I said. "Let this one have the prize."

"Now the next thing is," said the Colonel, who had charge of the prize tickets, "where shall we fasten the ticket?"

"Round his trunk," suggested Jackson.

"Or the tusk," said I.

"I suppose the creature's quite quiet," said the Colonel, advancing cautiously towards the elephant, with the ticket hanging by the string in his hand.

"Oh, perfectly," said Jackson, keeping at a respectful distance.

"They are very seldom violent," said I, retreating a pace or two.

Colonel Moodle got close up to the creature, without its apparently perceiving his approach, when suddenly it lifted its trunk perpendicularly in the air above its head, opened its huge mouth, and emitted a most frightful shriek, something between a loud squeak and a hoarse cry. Quick as lightning the Colonel turned round to run away, but his foot getting entangled in the "karbi," (stout Indian corn stalks, that form the staple of elephants' food) he fell prostrate on the ground, looking as if he expected the next instant to find himself securely lodged in the elephant's inside. Jackson* was holding his sides; I could scarce restrain my laughter.

"I think it will be the best way to find the elephant's mahout (or keeper) and give him the ticket," I said, as soon as Colonel Moodle had recovered his feet and joined us, a little distance from the scene of the disaster.

So we found the mahout, who said his elephant's name was Motee, and to him we gave the ticket.

After this was over, we had only the pigeons to examine, and here we had less difficulty, for although none of us knew anything at all about pigeons, we all unanimously fixed upon one that struck us as being the prettiest, and thus concluded our labours in the capacity of prize committee.

I must say a few words in concluding this

Chronicle about the Exhibition, and how it went off. It was opened with great *éclat*, and the programme was carefully observed. The only little mishap that occurred was at that part of the proceedings where Mr. Byewilwuffa, followed by Mr. Khas Mouza, and by the committee and the managers, secretaries, assistant-secretaries and principal visitors, two and two, were to walk up the centre aisle preceded by the band playing the National Anthem. Unfortunately, the band, which had come straight from a funeral up to the Exhibition, had forgotten to take off the music that was affixed to the instruments, and the procession set out, Mr. Byewilwuffa stalking sedately along, followed by the secretary, the committee, the assistant-secretaries, the manager and assistant-manager and principal visitors, to the tune of the Dead March in Saul. No one liked to break the order of the procession and run out and speak to the band master who was in front and at the time far away in the seventh heaven, for he had that morning made an offer and been accepted by a very pretty girl to whom he was much attached. So do sorrow and mirth, laughter and weeping, the wedding and the funeral, go hand in hand, as it were, in this chequered life. Mr. Khas Mouza waved his umbrella with the hope of attracting the band master's attention, but the

good man saw only his mistress waving her snowy handkerchief at him and not Mr. Khas Mouza's brown umbrella. The bandsmen saw nothing incongruous in it, all they attended to was that their music should be in tune and their pace likewise. So to slow time, as the chords of that magnificent piece of music, the wail of a broken heart over some beloved idol or venerated chief, swelled through the aisles and up along the vaulted roof, till its plaintive accents died away, growing fainter and fainter among Mr. Alsorts' fibres, the Honourable Kist Byewilwuffa, bearing himself majestically and little heeding the frantic gestures of his secretary, who waved his umbrella as an Indian his tomahawk at a funeral dance, perambulated the building, and, reaching his chair of state, declared the Exhibition open.

"Well, Mr. Alsorts," said I, as I met that gentleman two mornings after at the Exhibition building, "I hope the Exhibition has been a success."

"Oh, yes, most decidedly, sir, a great success. I have cleared at the very least a lac of rupees."

"You dont say so? Well, now, how did you manage it?"

"I've sold everything, you see, and got my price, too."

“Had you much here?”

“Oh, dear me, yes; why, two-thirds of the whole turn-out belongs to me.”

“Does it, indeed; and have you really sold all this—rubbish, I was going to say—pointing to the mass of miscellaneous articles, furniture, chandeliers, tables, what-nots, stools, pianos, crockery, musical boxes, English toys, shawls, rugs, durries, everything, in fact, that was there in such profusion. Have you really sold all this?”

“Yes, all, and I don’t mind letting you into my secret. You see, sir, I was very thick with Mr. Dahkil Duftar and Mr. Isteeffa all the time the preparations were going on. They found me useful. I know they don’t seem quite so fond of my society now. It’s no more, ‘Oh, Mr. Alsorts, do just come here, like a good fellow;’ or, ‘Alsorts, I wish you could give me a wrinkle here;’ or, ‘Alsorts, you must be deucedly tired, come and take a glass of beer and a sandwich.’ Ah, well, I can see as far as my neighbours; these gentlemen found me useful, and, well, I thought I might one day find them useful. So, seeing me so much with them the natives came about my place a little; well, I pretended to take no notice, but just let things run on. At last the Rajas began to come into Budgepore for the Exhibition, and they came to my place too. Then their vakeels

came next day to have a little conversation and to find out for their masters what this great 'shop' really meant: 'Was the Sirkar (Government) really opening a shop?' Well, I don't say that I said as much, but if the vakeels went away and told their masters that the British Government being really very hard up for cash, had hit upon this expedient for raising the wind, and that every Raja was expected to purchase in proportion to the extent of his revenues; I say, if the vakeels told the Rajas so, how could I help it? Next day I went to all the shops in the bazaar and the city, and I bought up every single thing I could lay my hands upon in the shape of glass, crockery, clocks, anything gaudily painted and rather showy, besides all the carpets, shawls, everything in short, and sent it all here, and I've sold every d——d thing at just treble its price, and shall I not say the Exhibition is a success? Long live Byewilwuffa, the jolly old buffer, say I!"

The last of the Exhibition ceremonies was a grand durbar, at which Mr. Byewilwuffa presented khilluts (presents) to four of the native gentry who had been prominent in their support of his pet scheme, who were also made honorary magistrates. One of these was our old friend Gunny Lall, who, at Mr. Wasilbakee's suggestion, had opened his money bags

and given 10,000 rupees towards the Exhibition. Another was Salig Ram, who had been imprisoned for forgery. But his forgery had, besides getting him into prison, brought him enormous wealth, and he presented 10,000 rupees, and received the distinction and undertook the duties of honorary magistrate, in which capacity he will, I hope, always recollect to sympathize with men who are so unfortunate as to sign other peoples' names to bills. The third was Moona Lall, money lender, who had grown enormously rich by usury, and the fourth was Khewut Sing, who had been tried for murdering his father, and acquitted, but being a rich man, had judiciously purchased the favour of the reigning power by a grant of 15,000 rupees to the Exhibition, and the loan of his elephant, the very elephant, by the way, to which we had adjudged the prize.

After it was all over, the remainder of the articles were sold by auction, Mr. Archimedes DeCruze acting as auctioneer. They fetched fifteen thousand rupees, and Mr. DeCruze having to receive ten per cent. as auctioneer, netted fifteen hundred by that transaction. He may have netted more, for the fifteen thousand rupees was never heard of again, nor, strange to say, was Mr. Archimedes DeCruze, who disappeared about that time.

Of course people wondered what had hap-

pened to him. Dakhil Duftar, who never had any but thoroughly trustworthy persons about him, thought at first he had probably fallen down a well, or been suddenly seized with cholera on his way home, and fully expected some tidings would be heard of him. But when time passed and nothing transpired, he came to the conclusion that he had been kidnapped by some of those Cabulee men who once or twice a year come down from Cabul with strings of camels laden with posteens, dried figs, apricots, &c., and return with merchandize from India, the real object of their journey, which is not to sell their own goods so much as to purchase others. Well, Dakhil Duftar was fully persuaded that some of these men had kidnapped Archimedes DeCruze and carried him off to sell him for a slave in Tartary, and so took no further steps to track him. I didn't know before that these men were ever suspected of kidnapping people in British India, no more did Dakhil Duftar, he said, but his serishtadar told him it was very frequently the case. Mr. Wasilbakee was also of the same opinion, and thought there was no doubt that Mr. Archimedes DeCruze had been kidnapped. And that opinion took the form of a settled conviction, after he had consulted his serishtadar and found that he corroborated in every particular the information furnished to Dakhil

Duftar. They thought the matter so important as to justify their bringing it to the notice of the Governor-General, which they did; of course through the "usual channels," but that functionary recorded his opinion that it was one of those cases in which he "couldn't interfere." Of course no one disputed the conclusions of Dakhil Duftar and Mr. Wasilbakee. They were, no doubt, correct. Only it struck me as a strange circumstance, that only the very day before this unfortunate kidnapping took place, as it subsequently transpired, DeCruze had realised on all his Government securities to the full amount of the fifteen thousand rupees, the proceeds of the auction, in addition to fifteen thousand more which he had in Government five per.cents.

There was a small deficit of forty thousand rupees altogether from the whole affair, but this was easily replaced, thanks to the *elasticity* of the resources of India, which financial people are so fond of talking about, and an additional rupee per maund on grain to be devoted exclusively to public works, being laid on by the octroi in the principal cities in the province, the surplus, with something out of the *nuzzool* fund, filled up the deficit, and as Mr. Byewilwuffa wrote in his minute on the subject, "The Exhibition was in every way a great success."

CHRONICLE IV.

THE HISTORY OF THE BARRACKS.

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CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF BUDGEPORE, AND HOW ANNEXATION WAS FORCED UPON US.

IN the consulship of Emilius Flaccus, Quintus Metellus being Master of the Horse——— what have I been writing, I meant to say, when the Hon'ble Kist Byewilwuffa was Lieutenant-Governor and Mr. Khas Mouza, Secretary, there came an order for European barracks to be built at Budgepore. You will ask what the barracks had to be built for? Well, for European soldiers to live in. And why were European soldiers to be quartered at Budgepore?

The necessity of replying to this question

reminds me that I have never yet chronicled the old history of Budgepore, nor put on record the events which led to that rich and fertile province coming under British sway. This I shall now proceed to do, very briefly. You need not be afraid, reader, of my taking up your time with a long disquisition upon the ancient history of this part of India. I shall merely trace the succession of events that led to the annexation of Budgepore. And if you have never heard or read this episode in Indian History, it must be because, like every one else, you never studied Indian History at all.

I shall not need to go back further than the time of Mahmoud of Ghazni in the year 1000, in whose train one of the most fierce and warlike of the Pathan tribes called the Talwarries came into Hindoostan, conquered and held the province of Budgepore.

We now pass over a considerable interval, till the time of Warren Hastings. When that great man held the reins of Government, Budgepore was a distant province, ruled over by a Nawab, who was always called the Nawab of Budgepore. I don't suppose he had any name, just as the Nawab of Rampore, the Maharajah of Jeypore, and other independent Princes and Sovereigns, it is well known, have no names, as how could they, seeing that they have neither god-fathers nor god-mothers?

Now having arrived at this stage of my chronicle, we' will, if you please, leave Budgepore for the present and return to London.

One afternoon, as Mr. Leopold Scheinfeldt, a rich goldsmith of the city of London, and one of the proprietors of India Stock, was stepping into the Bear and Bull dining rooms in Cornhill to have his midday meal, he encountered in the coffee room of that tavern Captain Robertson, of the E. I. C. Navy, who commanded one of the East India Company's ships, half merchantman, and half man-of-war. The two gentlemen greeted one another warmly, and sitting down at the same table, entered into conversation, in the course of which Captain Robertson, remarking upon the dividends upon India Stock, observed, that it was a mystery to him the East India Company did not look after their interests better than they did, for that if the Directors of the Company only did their duty to the proprietors, and protected them from being robbed by the servants of the Company in the settlements (the possessions of the Company in India were always called "the settlements" in those days), the dividends would be quite double what they were. Being asked to enter into particulars, Captain Robertson proceeded to dilate upon the state and magnificence, the luxury and grandeur of the *menage* maintained by the

governors and officers of the Company abroad. He said much upon the resources of the country, the interior of which he had visited, having been up as far as Chandernagore, and he impressed on his hearer's mind very forcibly, that if stringent requisitions were sent out to the Governor of Bengal and other officers abroad, to double the revenues or the dividends, they could be doubled without any difficulty whatever.

After dinner they parted, and Mr. Leopold Scheinfeldt went back to his shop; but instead of remaining there, as was his wont at that time of the afternoon (in those days it was the custom to dine early), he desired his assistant to remain in the shop, and passed along into his own little back room, where he remained for an hour or more, with some account books before him, immersed in thought. The good man was taking stock, and reckoning what his property would be worth if the dividends on the India stock were only doubled. The demon of covetousness had long had possession of that man's soul.

The following morning on his way to the city, for even then the more wealthy of the citizens had begun to adopt the habit of having their residences westwards, he called at the office of Mr. Lloyd Frankfort, one of the Directors of the E. I. C., and to him he told all he had heard from Captain Robertson the day before.

The following week there was a general meeting of proprietors, at which Mr. Leopold Scheinfeldt spoke his mind, and said, from private information which had reached him, he felt assured that they, the proprietors, received much smaller dividends than was right; and that if a little pressure were put upon the Governors and other officers at the settlements, much larger remittances would be made. No resolution was proposed upon this, and the meeting broke up; but Mr. Leopold Scheinfeldt was much gratified when one of the gorgeously-dressed beadles who used to vegetate in the India House came up to him, in the presence of many of the other proprietors, and said, that the Chairman of the Court of Directors had sent his compliments, and, if convenient to Mr. Leopold to afford him a few minutes' conversation, he should be glad if he would step into his private room. Thither, accordingly, Mr. Leopold went; and there he met a small and secret conclave of those great men,—the directors. What passed it is out of my power to record. What resulted was this: that the next ship that left the docks for Calcutta took out a large bundle of despatches, addressed "To our well-beloved and trusty Governor, Warren Hastings, Esq., at Fort William, Bengal," one of which contained a missive, marked "private and important," which caused Warren Hastings much thought. In this de-

spatch it was intimated to that officer, that unless the remittances to England were doubled in the course of the year, he would be recalled.

The contents of this despatch were not communicated to the Council; and this may be one reason why it is not to be found among the records of Government in Fort William. One reason, I say; for another reason which may easily account for it is, that the white ants may very possibly have devoured it.

After dismissing the Council, Warren Hastings returned to his private room, and sent for his native private secretary, or meer munshi,—a man, you may be sure, of very great influence, and very great talent: of very great influence, for the meer munshi of the Governor was sure to have enormous influence; of very great talent, for Warren Hastings was not likely to be served by any one but a man of very great talent. This meer munshi kept what may be called the “Indian Doomsday Book;” that is to say,—a book wherein was entered the name, history, antecedents and surroundings, of every chief and man of note in India, the amount of wealth he was possessed of, how he had acquired it, the amount of his revenues and how collected, his habits of life, his physical and intellectual attainments; in short, all that could be found out about him. It was a great book, that; great I think not only in size, but in importance, and

was kept in an iron safe under lock and key, in the strong room, where the meer munshi deposited his jewels and treasure. The Nawab of Budgepore you may be sure had a page to himself in that book.

On this occasion the record was consulted. Warren Hastings leant back in an easy chair, close to the open venetian window looking out upon the waters of the Hooghly, his forehead fanned by the evening southern breeze; while the meer munshi sat at a table near him, and read out the history and the antecedents of the Nawab of Budgepore, and all that was known about him. It was there recorded, that the Nawab was enormously rich; that he had, or was said to have amassed, ten crores* of rupees in jewels and cash; that he was a parsimonious, miserly old man, who spent most of his time in his harem, leaving the affairs of state pretty much to the management of an astute Hindoo minister, or dewan, Roy Chund; that the dewan also was reported to be very wealthy, and to be connected with nearly all the large banking houses throughout the principal cities of India.

The meer munshi finished, closed the book, and took his departure; but Warren Hastings sat in the same place without moving for a full hour, till the shades of evening had fallen, and

* A crore is a million.

the noisy crows intimated their intention of retiring to rest on the neighbouring trees.

Next day the following Minute passed the Council:—

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTE BOOK.

The East India Company's Settlements, Bengal. Dated Fort William, 1st April, 17—.

Proceedings of Council.

The following resolution was passed this day :

That, with a view to increase the trade between the Settlements of the Honourable the East Company and Great Britain, it is desirable to enter into communications with the Nawab of Budgepore, for the purpose of opening up the trade of that part of the country with the Settlement of Calcutta; and that Captain Diaper be deputed, under special instructions, to be communicated to him direct from the Governor, with suitable presents &c. for the Nawab, to arrange a commercial treaty with that prince.

What Captain Diaper's instructions were I cannot exactly say, because the copy he took with him was destroyed during the course of events that subsequently ensued; and the copy that was no doubt retained in the Foreign Office, must also have perished by those destructive little creatures, the white ants. I

know he had some demi-official written instructions, at any rate, and this is the way the information reached me. Captain Diaper was sent for by Warren Hastings, and had a long private interview. What passed, of course no one can tell now. There was a young gentleman at that time in Hastings' employ as a sort of assistant private secretary and librarian. He used to conduct a good deal of the Governor's private correspondence, look after his papers and books, &c., and in short, was a sort of unattached aide-de-camp. He was drowned in the Hooghly about two years after this, but his family preserved some letters of his and a diary which he kept, and knowing that I was engaged in writing these chronicles, they kindly volunteered to let me have the use of the diary and letters. In the former, I find this entry :—

“Captain Diaper having private interview with the Governor—Go in, as he is about to leave to get some papers out of the *escritoire*, and hear him say : ‘Well, your Excellency will excuse my speaking so plainly, but it will be necessary for my own protection should anything happen to your Excellency, which God forbid ! during my absence ; that I should be able, if necessary, to produce your Excellency's written instructions.’ Upon that, Hastings took a pencil and wrote as much as would fill a sheet of note paper on the four sides, signed it, and

pushed it across the table to Captain Diaper, saying, as he did so: 'this will be quite sufficient for you, Captain Diaper.' And Captain Diaper, after reading what had been written, replied: 'Quite so, your Excellency,' and took his leave."

This is all that is known about it. Captain Diaper lost his life on the mission on which he went, but neither the private letter of instructions nor the official one was found or recovered. The papers he had with him were probably destroyed, and the office copy, as I said, has no doubt been consumed by the white ants.

Captain Diaper proceeded to Budgepore, where he was courteously received by the Nawab, delivered his presents and credentials, and took up his abode in a house allotted to him, which was subsequently called the Residency. 'I have no means of knowing what passed between Captain Diaper and the Nawab, but after he had been there a short time, engaged, no doubt, in arranging a commercial treaty, and confining his attention exclusively to the development of trade, symptoms of disagreement shewed themselves between the Nawab and his Dewan, which speedily ripened into an open quarrel. At last Roy Chund began to assemble, and enlist armed men. The Nawab's security was threatened, an *emeute* or two took place, and Captain Diaper as British

Agent retired across the frontier and took up his abode in the nearest friendly state, on what might be considered British territory. He had not been there long, before he received overtures from the Nawab, soliciting the assistance of the British Government. These despatches were duly forwarded to Calcutta, and in a short time a reply was received tendering the aid of a military force, provided certain sums of money were paid down as expenses. The end of it was that a force consisting of a regiment of sepoy, two hundred Europeans, and three galloper guns, as light field guns were called in those days, were despatched to the aid of the Nawab, and five crores of the Nawab's rupees were sent in hard cash down to Calcutta, and duly shipped for England. Soon after their arrival there, Mr. Leopold Scheinfeldt was elected into the Direction.

Meantime Roy Chund had taken the field at the head of ten thousand infantry, and five thousand horse with thirty guns. But the British Contingent, ably handled by Colonel Arbuthnot who commanded, and which consisted of the eight hundred sepoy, two hundred Europeans, and the three galloper guns, and aided by the Nawab's army of twenty thousand men, who all ran away directly the first shot was fired, easily routed them, and Roy Chund, a fugitive, was glad to seek and obtain protec-

tion in British territory. The Nawab was then reseatd on the throne which he had actually vacated, having run away from fear directly Roy Chund took the field, but three crores of rupees more were demanded and received by the East India Company for the expenses of the war. Roy Chund managed, through his friends the bankers, to get most of his treasure sent away, but his palace was looted, and Colonel Arbuthnot the next year retired from the service and went home, where he bought a large estate, was called the Nabob, and went into parliament. Captain Diaper now returned to Budgepore as Political Agent, while the Nawab's crown was confirmed to him and his heirs "*quamdiu se bene gesserint.*" Arrangements being entered into for the regular payment of a British force required to maintain tranquillity and secure the throne to its possessor.

This payment soon fell into arrears, for the disturbed state of the country had prevented the revenue being collected, and one tract of territory after another was "ceded" to the British Government in lieu of payment, till all the Nawab had left was the garden round his palace.

Meantime, the Nawab, having spent all his money, and Roy Chund having plenty at his command, the latter easily fomented disturb-

ances, and collecting an army, marched towards the frontier. An *emeute* took place in the city. Roy Chund forced the British troops to retreat, drove out the Nawab, and seated himself upon the "Musnud" or throne. The British Government then sent a force to restore order, and finding Roy Chund *de facto* sovereign, they confirmed him in the hereditary possession of the crown, which was guaranteed to him and his heirs in consideration of the payment of three crores of rupees.

All these changes did not happen without disturbance and *emeutes*, in one of which Captain Diaper was killed and the Residency plundered. And it was on this occasion that the papers I spoke of just now were in all probability destroyed. At Roy Chund's death the country was involved in anarchy. The Nawab was dead also, having left a son and heir to the *de jure* sovereignty, while Roy Chund had left an adopted son, to whom he had bequeathed the "musnud," or throne.

The country was for the next few years involved in such anarchy, that the British Government, out of compassion to the people, virtually annexed it, that is, they took the revenues and maintained a Political Agent, with a considerable force under his orders at the capital.

When the two minors came of age, the

British Government being obliged to choose between them, selected the heir of the Nawab as a rightful claimant of the throne, and he was installed into the office. Incessant disturbances ensued, which lasted several years. The Nawab's son and Roy Chund's adopted son died, leaving adopted sons, legitimate sons, and illegitimate sons, all of whom adopted heirs, disinherited them, and then re-adopted them, and finally they all adopted one another, till the whole question of the succession became involved in inextricable confusion. And so matters went on, till a few years before the period when my chronicle takes up the thread of the story, the Government was forced to annex the country altogether, and Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, then a young civilian of ten or fifteen years' standing, was deputed on special duty to "settle" it.

Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa had gained a great name in the service as a rising man, having distinguished himself very much at Haileybury, where he had gained the highest honours in law. This he had done in a fair and open field of competition, for the course of study, consisting of the second volume of Blackstone and the portion of Hallam relating to the feudal system, and the other students having gone in to the examination without reading the works mentioned, which Mr. Byewilwuffa had done, he

easily distanced his competitors, secured the prize, was most honourably noticed at the public examination where Mr. St. George-and-the-Dragon, the President of the Court of Directors, spoke of him in terms of the highest eulogy, and prophesied a glorious and brilliant career for the distinguished scholar.

So Mr. Byewilwuffa on special duty, with two assistant-collectors, aided by seven hundred native "ameens," proceeded to "settle" the new province. A thorough and sound real property lawyer, as was Mr. Byewilwuffa, thanks to his study of Blackstone, Vol. II., he of course set to work to investigate the titles and the customs under which land tenures had previously existed. In doing this, the two collectors and the seven hundred native ameens were of the utmost possible assistance, because, while the collectors went out shooting, the ameens, three hundred and fifty of which were allotted to each collector, went about among the ryots and the zemindars (the labourers and landed proprietors), and investigated the ancient titles and the nature of the land tenures. The results of these researches was duly communicated to Mr. Byewilwuffa, who at the end of two years drew up a most lucid and valuable report, which has long been looked upon as the *chef d'œuvre* of the civil service, and upon this report the "settlements" were made.

It would of course be out of place here were I to enter much into detail. I may, however, just mention one or two points, which show how completely Mr. Byewilwuffa had mastered his subject, and established the system of land tenures upon the soundest possible basis, that is to say, the old and pre-existing customs of the country, with which the government were careful not to interfere.

Thus it was ascertained that a ryot (labourer) who had occupied land for the space of two years, and had buried any of his relations in it, acquired proprietary rights, which could not be interfered with, unless within twenty days from the date on which he deposited the remains of his relations in the soil, he had either dug a well or built a wall anywhere on the holding, in which case the title was forfeited. Thus also the occupier of a dwelling-house, if he had a child born in it, acquired a proprietary right, subject to the payment of rent, however. This proprietary right determined upon the death of the child. There was another class of sub-proprietary rights in the soil which arose in this way :—When a ryot had occupied an estate for a period sufficiently long to enable him to get two crops successively from the soil, and had afterwards dug a pukka (masonry) well, if the zemindar fell into it, provided he was taken out of the well defunct, the ryot acquired what was

called a sub-proprietary right, that is to say, he could not be ousted as long as he paid the headman of the village a certain sum, and maintained a certain number of indigent brahmins.

I must not, however, dwell any longer on these dry details of land tenures, lest I should weary my readers. Suffice it to say that the "settlement" of Budgepore secured Mr. Byewilwuffa's fame; he rose rapidly in the service, and wrote a standard work on "land settlements," besides giving government very valuable advice in passing the great rent-law act. Of Mr. Byewilwuffa's assistants, who aided him in this great settlement, one of the collectors fell into one of the "pukka wells," which accident resulted in his gaining a freehold of six feet of ground in the Budgepore territory, the other became Commissioner. The seven hundred native Ameens were appointed to various posts, lumberdars, tehsildars, thanadars, jemadars, and I don't know how many other "dars." Each Ameen had been allowed seven messengers, of whom there were therefore 4,900, who were all provided for in various offices in the new territories. Each of these messengers had five brothers, who also found occupation under government, to the number of 24,500. The province was portioned out into districts, to each of which ten uncovenanted deputy collectors were appointed, and twenty petty

judges or moonsiffs. Each deputy collector had five messengers, and each moonsiff four. Jails were built everywhere, and "thanas" (small district police stations), a force of 20,000 police were raised from the other provinces and located in the new territories, and the province to complete its happiness and prosperity, was incorporated into British dominion, and came under the "regulations."

And it is one of the most extraordinary and unaccountable phenomena I ever met with in the history of any people, that in spite of all these beneficial measures, in spite of the expense the government went to, in spite of the admirable settlement of a man of genius like Mr. Byewilwuffa, the country languished, trade grew faint, the soil degenerated into waste land, the cities and villages became comparatively depopulated, and so besotted and sunk in ignorance were the people, that, instead of welcoming with open arms the advent of British rule, the old savage spirit of the Talwarry race still occasionally showed itself in symptoms of disaffection.

THE HISTORY OF THE BARRACKS.

CHAPTER II.

THE INSURRECTION.

THE disturbed state of the province of Budgepore at length attracted the notice of government, and they resolved to send their best man there as Commissioner. Accordingly, Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, although the appointment was no promotion to him then, was solicited to proceed to Budgepore and endeavour to reduce the province to order. He received a most flattering letter from government, and, of course, he accepted the office.

So Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa found himself a second time at Budgepore. On this occasion, as before, he went accompanied by his serishtadar. And he had not been there long before disturbances were quelled, and the district be-

came as quiet and orderly as any in the whole country. For Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa had an admirable recipe for settling disaffected provinces. He had no sooner taken up the reins of government than he caused it to be publicly known, that it was his method never, on any account, to enquire into charges against subordinate officers. Under his *régime* authority was always supported. Such a thing as a complaint against the police for torture or bribery was never to be entertained. And the result was that everything appeared on the surface eminently satisfactory, and Mr. Byewilwuffa's reputation rose in proportion.

After Mr. Byewilwuffa had been a year or two in his office as special Commissioner, the Court of Directors, for some reason or other, wrote out and called for a report upon the state of the province. I hardly know the object that prompted the enquiry, probably it was because there was a scheme on foot for reducing the army, and they wanted to know if this province was sufficiently well affected and tranquillized to enable them to adopt that measure with safety. On receiving the order to report, Mr. Byewilwuffa sent to all the collectors directing them to report each on his own district, and the collectors sending each for his native clerk, described what was wanted, and desired that

the report might be ready that day week. So the reports all came in due time, when Mr. Byewilwuffa wrote a general report, reviewing the minor reports of the collectors, and the whole amounting to a Blue Book of 750 pages folio was transmitted to the Court of Directors, and, eventually, laid upon the table of the House of Commons.

But I must not anticipate. The day after the report left—I need hardly say, that in it the province of Budgepore was represented as being in a most satisfactory condition, the people well affected, crime almost unknown, the revenue regularly paid, and the people cheerful and happy under British rule—the day after the report left, as Mr. Byewilwuffa was returning from his morning ride through the city, he found all the shops shut in the main street. Now he thought this was odd at that hour in the morning, at least, it was not usual. By the time he had ridden (he was walking his horse) half way up the street, he was fired at from behind. The bullet whizzed past his ear, uncomfortably close. Mr. Byewilwuffa was not a coward. He knew he had been shot at. He knew he had had as narrow escape as possible of his life, and he could not but expect that a second attempt would be made. But he did not quicken his pace. He might have put spurs

to his horse and galloped off; he did no such thing. He merely turned round, and marked with his eye the position of the houses he had just passed, and rode on still at a foot pace. He had not gone ten yards before another shot was fired, and again the ball missed him, but only by a fraction of an inch as it seemed. Still he would not ride on. No other attempt was made, and Mr. Byewilwuffa reached home in safety, and bathed, and had his breakfast as usual. After breakfast he sent for his serishtadar, told him what had happened, and asked him whether the attempt was that of a private assassin or was it a symptom of wide-spread disaffection. The serishtadar replied that, "by his Honour's favour, the country was never in a more tranquil state, as was it not proved to be so by the report which His Honour had only the day before sent to government?" Mr. Byewilwuffa at once saw the force of this argument, and admitted it. He then desired the serishtadar to make enquiries, and that functionary left the house for the purpose of doing so.

Now it so happened, that there was a rich banker in the street where the shot had been fired, to whom the serishtadar was indebted one thousand rupees, and had been in debt for the last twelve months, during which time interest,

at twenty-four per cent., had been duly accumulating. Of late the creditor had been rather impatient, and had once or twice rashly ventured upon dunning. It is dangerous work, sometimes, dunning people; and Heera Lall Seth, of Budgepore, found it so to his cost.

. After an hour's absence, the serishtadar returned to Mr. Byewilwuffa and told him that he had discovered the whole plot,—for plot there was; and in the evening he would take him to the house of a certain man in the city, in the upper room of which—so certain was his information,—a double-barrelled fowling-piece would be found which had recently been fired off. Mr. Byewilwuffa, I suppose instinctively, suggested whether it would not be better to go at once and search the house, but the serishtadar assured him that was not at all the proper thing to do, for expecting a search, the perpetrator of the deed would have concealed the weapon; by evening, no steps having been taken, he would be thrown off his guard, and the search would be likely to be much more effectual. I need not add, that Mr. Byewilwuffa entirely concurred with his serishtadar: he had entirely concurred with him for seven and twenty years, ever since he had been his munshi at Writer's Buildings, Calcutta, and kept his accounts; and was it likely he should commence to differ from him now?

Accordingly, in the evening, Mr. Byewilwuffa himself, accompanied by a native officer, two mounted police, and the serishtādar, repaired to Heera Lall's house. The shops in the bazaar were still closed. The commissioner followed the serishtadar into an upper room. There, by the window, they found a double-barrelled fowling-piece, which, on examination, proved to have been recently used. There was no one in the house or on the premises but a watchman. And a warrant was issued at once for the apprehension of Heera Lall.

I may as well here anticipate a little, so as to complete this episode of my story. Heera Lall was tried for an attempt at murder. Fifty witnesses for the prosecution deposed to having seen the prisoner station himself at the window, gun in hand, and fire, as the commissioner rode up the street. Fifty witnesses for the defence, deposed that, during the day in question, Heera Lall had been in his shop the whole morning, transacting his ordinary business. These witnesses were customers and constituents; and their testimony was to a certain extent borne out by the banker's day-book, which contained entries, dated the day in question, relating to matters to which the witnesses had deposed. The principal feature in the case for the prosecution was the production of the fowling-piece, which had been

discovered on Heera Lall's premises. During this part of the trial the prisoner's native advocate tendered evidence to show that the fowling-piece was an old fowling-piece of Mr. Byewilwuffa's, which he had once given to his serishtadar as a present; but the judge cut that part of the case short by telling the advocate not to worry the court by irrelevant nonsense; for, if the fowling-piece had been used for an unlawful purpose by the prisoner, it could make no difference whether it had been the property of the serishtadar, Mr. Byewilwuffa, or any one else. Upon which the advocate folded his hands, and murmuring, "jo hukm," or, "as you order," sat down; and when Heera Lall was sentenced to be hanged, consoled his client by telling him it was his "kismat," or destiny, which did not appear to convey much comfort to the prisoner, though it was doubtless quite true.

The sentence of course went up to the Sudder, or Supreme Court, for confirmation; and there being some peculiar circumstances attending it, a full bench met to consider it. Mr. Momjama, then senior judge, delivered a long and elaborate argument, setting forth his reasons for confirming the sentence passed by the lower court; and after he had finished, Mr. Lifeffa, the second judge, said: "Well, I don't understand all that, but I say, Wind him up;" a formula for a

capital sentence not unfamiliar to the criminal side of the Sudder Court.

The other judges having concurred, Heera Lall was in due time, in the language of the court, "wound up."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Byewilwuffa, the day after the execution, examining the fowling-piece, "how very extraordinary; I declare this is the very identical old fowling-piece I gave Nusseer Khan (that was the serishtadar's name) in Calcutta, years and years ago. How on earth did that old rascal, Heera Lall, get hold of it, I wonder?"

The same day that Heera Lall was hanged, the report on Budgepore left the Governor-General's hands for transmission to the Court of Directors, and His Excellency in Council despatched a very flattering letter to Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, complimenting him very highly upon the favourable report he had sent in, and adding that he had in his despatch to the Court of Directors spoken in high terms of the valuable services Mr. Byewilwuffa had rendered to the state. That complimentary letter, however, never reached Mr. Byewilwuffa, for this reason, that the runner who carried the letter-bags was murdered. For a dangerous insurrection had broken out in Budgepore. The Talwarries were such a barbarous and ignorant race that they were not content with the mild rule of the

British Government. The stupid people could not see the great advantages of having jails built at their expense all over the country, and police-stations with secure lock-up houses attached. They could not realize the advantage of open courts, and a free channel of justice where a man had only to pay for what he wanted and got it directly, provided he paid enough; they were, in short, altogether too barbarous to recognise the blessings Heaven had sent them in giving them a government like that of Mr. Byewilwuffa's. So they preferred running the risk of an insurrection.

In those days the Bengal army was in its prime. Its laurels were, you may say, never greener or more fresh. No regiment was ever inspected by a (Company's) General officer, but he left it on record that he considered the drill, discipline, and appearance of the —th regiment of Native Infantry far superior to that of any English regiment he had ever met. General officers declared, at the mess tables of native regiments, that they would far rather go on service with native troops than with Europeans. And it was a proof at the same time of the sincerity and disinterestedness of these officers that when there was a campaign, they all made strong favour at Head Quarters to avoid getting posted to the command of a Black Brigado

(A Black Brigade meant a brigade exclusively of native troops). The Governor-General wrote most flattering eulogies to the Court of Directors upon the state of the native army, and recommended diminishing the force of Europeans in the Company's employ, and getting as many of the royal regiments as they could, sent home.

At the time I speak of, the 77th N. I. was quartered at Budgepore. It was considered the crack regiment in the service, and had been made "Light Infantry" for its services in Afghanistan. Colonel Moodle commanded the regiment. (That was before the amalgamation, since which he has been superseded by his nephew, Captain Kummurbund). Young Sticklebat was adjutant. He afterwards got into the choir at the Simla church, when Lady Amethyst Jones' husband was Commander-in-Chief. I mention him in this way, because it was well known that Sir Amethyst Jones left every thing in the hands of his wife, who, with the assistance of the military secretary, commanded the army. From the choir Sticklebat got command of the Meddlesore contingent, one of the best appointments, in those days, going, for you were allowed to draw cavalry pay, and a contingent allowance for all the horses in the two regiments of cavalry, which were always

returned as cavalry, but were in reality infantry, Colonel Moodle was a strict disciplinarian. He was unfortunately rather corpulent, but that was his misfortune, not his fault. He used to go to parade always in a palanquin, but when on the parade ground he always mounted. He had his charger drawn up alongside of the palanquin: his orderly serjeant assisted him to get on the roof, from whence the passage to the saddle was easy. The groom carried his spurs, and when the parade was half over and the charger had carried its rider (nineteen stone) for about an hour, he put on his master's spurs, I mean he fixed the spurs in the boxes of his master's boots. I don't mean that the groom himself put on the spurs, that would be absurd.

During the hot weather there were no parades, except one for inspection and the manual and platoon on Saturday afternoons. In the rainy season, when the ground was very wet, officers commanding companies used to go to parade with an orderly carrying two bricks. These bricks the orderly placed on the ground in front of the centre of each company, a few yards off, and the officers got out of their palanquins or off their horses, and stood upon the bricks while they put their companies through the manual and platoon exercises, and thus kept their feet

dry.* Altogether there was the best possible feeling between the officers and men of the 77th Light Infantry. The mess was a very pleasant little mess to dine at, the few ladies that were with the regiment were great favourites, and altogether a young man might find himself in a more uncomfortable billet than that of a subaltern in the 77th Native Light Infantry at Budgepore.

The disturbance at Budgepore broke out one evening early in July, 18—. A number of the citizens assembled in large crowds outside the city, which, like most of the cities of Upper India, was surrounded with gardens and garden walls and country houses that formerly belonged to the nobility and gentry of the district. Here and there were vacant spots of ground of considerable extent, and upon these vacant spots of ground the multitude assembled. Many came armed with drums, others with horns, and others with guns, matchlocks, and fire-arms of various descriptions. Those who had drums beat them, those who had horns blew them, those who had fire-arms fired them off in the air, and those who had neither drums, horns, nor fire-arms, talked as loud as they could, or

* There is, I am told, still extant an old Order-book at Barrackpore, directing officers to discontinue the practice of having bricks taken down for them to stand upon while *inspecting* their companies, the same being an unmilitary practice.

ran about hither and thither bawling at the top of their voices.

As soon as news of the insurrection reached the civil station, which was between the city and the military cantonment, the residents were of course much alarmed. There were about five bungalows occupied by civilians and their families, and about ten or twenty more tenanted by uncovenanted clerks, pensioners, and others. Almost all these were bungalows, that is to say, one-floor houses or large cottages, with thatched roofs of dry grass. Mr. Byewilwuffa, however, lived in what is called a large *pukka* house, that is to say, a house built of masonry, brick and mortar, and roofed with beams of wood laid horizontally and covered with mud mixed with lime, brick, &c., and a few of the rooms were roofed with large flat stones. This building, being of course much stronger and less liable to fire than the bungalows, was the rendezvous for all the civilians and their families who left their own houses when the noise and hubbub began, as their servants told them there was a disturbance, and that they had better get out of their houses lest the thatch should be set on fire by some evil-disposed persons. Accordingly they all repaired to the Commissioner's house and assembled in the dining room, the door

of which they carefully shut and barricaded with furniture, leaving only one door open for egress or ingress.

Meantime, a half-witted idiot boy, who used to be always roaming about Budgepore, and being perfectly harmless was never ill treated, and allowed to go and do pretty much as he liked, becoming violently excited at the noise the people were making outside the city, ran across some of the compounds (or court-yards) in the civil station, making the best of his way to the point of attraction, the place where all the noise and bustle and blowing of horns was going on. As he passed through one of the compounds he accidentally came upon some loose charcoal cinders alight on the ground. They had either been thrown out of a pipe-bowl or had been let drop by some servant who had been taking some lighted charcoal for cooking purposes from one part of the premises to another. What possessed the boy it is impossible to say, but the idea seemed to seize him of doing mischief for the first time in his life. I suppose it was that he was in an extraordinary state of excitement owing to the noise and the effect it had upon his nerves. Anyhow, he took up some dry straw he found lying about, and applying the lighted charcoal to it, with his breath soon fanned it into a flame,

and then he deliberately set fire to the thatch of the bungalow. The brilliant blaze of light seemed to incite him to extend his experiment, and he went from house to house unnoticed and uninterrupted, and set fire to some half dozen bungalows one after the other.

Meantime, Mr. Byewilwuffa had sent a mounted messenger to Colonel Moodle desiring him to call out his regiment at once and proceed to the focus of the insurrection and put it down. Colonel Moodle, on receipt of the requisition for military aid, wrote to the Adjutant directing him to call out the regiment immediately, and the Adjutant sent an order to the Sergeant-Major to sound the assembly and bring the men on parade. As soon as he could get his horse saddled and himself dressed, the Adjutant rode down to the parade, where, instead of finding the regiment turned out, he saw no one but the Sergeant-Major and the Havildar-Major (native Sergeant-Major) and the Pay Havildars, or Sergeants, of Companies, who told him that the men objected altogether to turn out, as the weather looked threatening, and they thought it was going to rain. Whereupon the Adjutant went home, and wrote the following public letter to the Colonel :—

Sir,—I have the honour to report that in pursuance with the instructions conveyed in your demi-official of to-day's date, I transmitted the necessary orders to the Sergeant-Major to turn out the men, and proceeded myself to parade immediately afterwards. On arriving there I found that the men objected to turn out, owing to the threatening appearance of the weather.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant

JUNIUS STICKLEBAT,

*Adjutant, 77th Native (Light) Infantry.
Budgepore, 7th July, 18—.*

On receipt of the letter, Colonel Moodle wrote to Mr. Byewilwuffa as follows:—

Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that in accordance with the requisition contained in your demi-official of to-day's date, I issued the necessary orders at once for the regiment under my command to turn out, but I regret to find that owing to the threatening appearance of the weather, the men of the regiment under my command object to get under arms.

I have directed a court of enquiry to sit to-morrow for the purpose of investigating the cause of this apparent dereliction of military duty, when the matter will be thoroughly

sifted, and a report forwarded to Army Head Quarters through the usual Channel.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

AUGUSTUS MAXIMILIAN MOODLE,
Commanding 77th N. Light Infantry.

Budgepore, July 7th, 18—.

TO KIST BYEWILWUFFA, Esq., C.S.,

Commissioner of Budgepore.

While these military operations were in progress, the state of mind of the inmates of Mr. Byewilwuffa's house may be more easily imagined than described. There were five ladies with their children there. Two of the husbands only of these ladies were present, the other three were out in the district, shooting. Those who happened to be present were the Judge and Collector, and these gentlemen were seated one in a neem tree and the other in a peepul tree in the compound of Mr. Byewilwuffa's house, double-barrelled rifle in hand, awaiting the approach of the insurgents. Each had five chuprassees, who stood five under each tree. One chuprassee carried a cheroot-box, one an earthen jar containing water, one a tumbler, one a bottle of brandy, while the fifth looked on.

All this time Mr. Byewilwuffa was indefatigable in his exertions to calm the fears of

the ladies, who gazed through the closed windows at the burning bungalows, and listened with beating hearts to the sound of the drums, horns, and voices of the insurgents, who, however, judging from the sounds, did not appear to be approaching nearer. Mr. Byewilwuffa attempted to allay their fears by assuring them that he had sent off early intimation of the state of affairs to Colonel Moodle, and that in a very short time the military would be on the spot, the insurrection trampled out, and order restored. What were his feelings when Colonel Moodle's letter was put into his hands! He had, however, scarcely time to realize the full effect of the communication, when his attention was attracted by piercing shrieks from the opposite side of the room, near the open door. He hastened to the spot, and found that the alarm had been occasioned by the approach of Mr. D'Rozario, the head writer in the Collector's office, armed with a brace of pistols, and accompanied by his wife and five children, who were making for the rendezvous.

All minor considerations were now resolved into the determination of the question as to whether Mr. D'Rozario, the head clerk in the Collector's office, should be admitted or not. Meanwhile the door was shut and bolted, while the question was being discussed. And it was

at length resolved that, in consideration of his brace of pistols, Mr. D'Rozario should be admitted, but not his wife and children.

So the door was partially opened, and the result of the conclusion which the garrison had arrived at duly communicated to Mr. D'Rozario, who, much to the astonishment of the besieged, walked off, with his wife and five children following behind.

Meantime, however, the flames of the burning bungalows had caught the eye of Colonel Moodle, who ordered his charger and resolved upon immediate action.*

THE HISTORY OF THE BARRACKS.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF BUDGEPORE.

WHEN Colonel Moodle reached the parade ground, he found the quarter-guard had turned out. On seeing the Colonel approach, the jemadar (native officer) formed his men in line at open order, and stood ready to present arms. After this ceremony he walked up to the Colonel, and lowering his sword in military salute said without drawing a breath,—

“Kotalgardmenekjemadardohavildarcharnaik
beessepahidonishanektumboorekchowkeedobocc
usdohazarcharsowrupceahospitalmenpainteessic
kmanoursubacha.”

Which being interpreted signifies,—

“In the quarter-guard there are one jemadar, two havildars, four naiks, and twenty sepoy, two colours, one drum, one chair, two boxes,

two thousand four hundred rupees, in the hospital thirty-five sick, and all is well."

While this announcement was being made, the Sergeant-Major came up, followed by a bugler who had been going about incessantly sounding the "alarm," and the "assembly," but without effect. At the command of the Colonel the bugler now sounded the "quick march," followed by "fix bayonets," and immediately some two or three hundred men appeared at the head of the lines advancing towards the parade ground. The sergeant-major and the pay sergeants then came forward and said, that "the whole regiment knew that the Colonel sahib was their father and mother, but there were in the quarter-guard a thousand rupees of half mounting (that is, belonging to the recruits' clothing fund), two hundred rupees of deserters' money, eight hundred belonging to the captains of companies, and four hundred belonging to the officers' mess and band funds; if the Colonel sahib would order the money to be distributed, there would be just three rupees to each man, the Colonel sahib was their father and mother, and he knew that the regiment was perfectly ready at that moment to follow him to England if necessary, but that if only the money was distributed the men would turn out with alacrity."

With the flames of the burning cantonments

casting a lurid light upon the heavens, the distant sounds of the insurrection in his ears, the British Indian empire trembling in the balance, was that a time to shirk responsibility? No, he would be answerable for the money! So the order was given that the money should be distributed among his "children," and within a short hour afterwards the 77th Native (Light) Infantry were drawn up in column of companies right in front, and all ready accoutred with forty rounds of service ammunition in pouch, prepared to follow their Colonel to the cannon's mouth. So the Colonel gave the word "quick march," and to the inspiring strains of the band, which played a march to the air of "Go where Glory waits Thee," with variations by Mr. DeSouza, the band-master, the 77th moved in column of companies across the military cantonment, and through the part of the settlement occupied by the civil residents towards the doomed city. On their way they halted for a few minutes while the Colonel detached Ensign Hughes with No. 7 Company to the Commissioner's house to protect the families of the residents.

On arriving there, Ensign Hughes was joyfully welcomed by the ladies and courteously received by the Judge and the Collector, who from the branches of the trees where they had located themselves, directed their servants below

to supply the officer with brandy-and-water and cheroots. Mr. Byewilwuffa then desired Ensign Hughes to detach a corporal's party for the protection of the Collector's cutcherry (an office where the clerks and others had taken refuge, to the number of a hundred and seventy souls, and where there were twenty lacs of treasure), and having mounted his horse and made over the civil charge to the Judge, and leaving Ensign Hughes in military command of the position, rode off to join the column under Colonel Moodle.

Ensign Hughes directed his men to pile arms, and lighting his cigar, seated himself on the compound wall.

By this time the moon had risen, and the light afforded by its rays was of great service to the troops in enabling them to wend their way among the gardens and through the lanes that formed the suburbs of the city. The insurgents, the moment they heard that the regiment was on its way, threw aside their drums, and horns and firearms and ran away for several miles, when they hid themselves in the fields, leaving the city perfectly empty, and Colonel Moodle made good his approach right up to the end of the main street without the least opposition. There he halted and detached No. 5 and No. 6 companies under Lieutenants Grimstone and Stokes, to advance in skirmish-

ing order round the city on both flanks, availing themselves of whatever shelter might be afforded by the garden walls, the hedges and the cultivation. These officers were enjoined to proceed with caution, not to fire till they saw the enemy, and to sweep round the city one to the right and the other to the left, till they met at the opposite side, when the Colonel, who was about to charge through the main street, after carrying the position, would effect a junction with them.

As soon as these movements had been indicated, and the two skirmishing companies had started, Colonel Moodle marched the Grenadier or No. 1 company, as it was more properly called, the corps being Light Infantry, up to the entrance of the main street. There, however, a difficulty presented itself. The company was in line, the street would only allow of men four abreast passing through it. So the Colonel halted the company a few moments to consider; the remaining six companies having been ordered to form up in close column and halt where they were till required.

With a view of effecting the necessary change of position to enable him to form four deep and so sweep the city, Colonel Moodle gave the word "No. 1, On your centre right about wheel." The movement was effected with as much precision as if the regiment had been on

parade instead of in the presence of an enemy, but when completed he found he was no nearer his object than before, the only difference being that he had now the company with their backs to the street instead of their faces. The Adjutant, seeing his commander's difficulty, suggested wheeling the company on its centre to the right. So the Colonel gave the word "No. 1, On your centre right wheel!" This brought them up with their right flank upon the end of the street. "Right four deep!" said the Colonel triumphantly, and as the men formed in fours facing the street, he gave the word "Fire a volley and prepare to charge. —Charge!"

Now some of my readers may think that firing a volley with a whole company in "Fours," would be awkward for those in front. But this would show great ignorance. The Bengal army was quite equal to the crisis, as well as to many others, for on this as on other occasions it fired in the air.

With a deafening "Jye jye Mahadeo!" the company charged up the street, sending the Colonel's charger with such force against the nearest house, as to cause the rider to fall against the door of a shop, which burst open and let the Colonel down gently upon a quantity of parched grain and sweetmeats put out for sale. He speedily recovered himself, however, and,

remounting his charger, the floor of the shop being on a level with the saddle, kept up with the rear of his column.

The two companies who had started in skirmishing order as directed, obeyed to the letter the instructions given them, except as to not firing. The Bengal sepoy has a peculiar disposition to discharge his musket when skirmishing. In the isolated position he then holds, being separated from his comrades, he requires a little artificial aid to keep up his pluck, and it is just this aid which is imparted by the report of the musket. So, as was very natural, both the companies as they made good their advance, kept firing, and as they fired in the air, and the volley of No. 1 company had also been discharged in the same direction, it was not unnatural that the bullets should descend, and that a good many of them should come in contact with the heads and shoulders of some of the men in all three of the companies that were engaged, one in the centre of the city and the other two outside.

The fact of the balls striking them from above, making wounds, as the medical officer expressed it in his report, "from above downwards," naturally enough impressed the men with the idea that they were being fired upon from the upper stories and the roofs of the houses in the main street and the suburbs.

By the time No. 1 Company had completed its gallant charge, had cleared the city, and emerged into the open ground on the other side where it halted for orders, Colonel Moodle had reached the front of the column. He found his men halted in "fours," breathless and excited. Firing was going on to the right and left of them, for by this time the two companies on their flank caught sight of the bayonets and musket barrels flashing in the moonbeams, and also became aware by other signs that they were in the neighbourhood of a body of armed men, so they advanced more cautiously but fired more rapidly. Colonel Moodle thus finding himself surrounded and his small party in imminent danger of being cut off, behaved with great presence of mind. He adopted the same manœuvre that Brigadier Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, did at Chillianwalla, when he swept the Sikh position after the check our arms received upon that famous field. He first of all formed line from "fours," and then ordered the rear rank to "right about." He then gave the word "Front and rear ranks fire a volley, and file firing from right to left!" The firing was kept up until all the ammunition was expended, and then it ceased. Meantime the two skirmishing companies having expended their ammunition, also ceased firing.

Colonel Moodle finding now that all opposi-

tion had ended, thought it would be useless to attempt to follow up the enemy, because he had not the least idea in which direction they had retreated ; he determined therefore upon returning to his lines, the object with which he had been called out having been satisfactorily accomplished. So he marched his men back again, taking the wounded with him, of whom there were a great many. Several severe contusions had occurred from the bullets striking the men in their descent, and, besides that, charging in the formation known as "fours deep" is not one of the movements down in "Torrens," the drill book at the time in vogue, and the 77th Native (Light) Infantry had never practised it. The consequence was that except the four men in the rear rank who were unhurt, there was not a single sepoy in the whole company who was not more or less injured by bayonet thrusts. Some of the wounds were very serious indeed, and a few actually proved fatal. But I need not enter more into detail upon this part of the subject.

Upon rejoining the main column, Colonel Moodle sounded the "assembly" and called in the two skirmishing companies, and prepared to march the regiment back to its lines. Another casualty had meantime occurred.

The Christian drummers, expecting a night of it, had brought out with them a good deal of

liquor, and Mr. DeSouza, the band master, having partaken too freely of it, unfortunately seated himself with considerable violence on the big drum, the parchment gave way, and Mr. DeSouza was precipitated into the drum, into which he fell in a very awkward position, for being a very stout man he was wedged in, his head and feet sticking out in a most helpless state. It was with much difficulty he was extricated, when, having sufficient sense to perceive the possible consequence of his intemperance, he made out that he had been struck on the head by a spent ball.

As soon as all arrangements for conveying the wounded were completed, the regiment marched back to their lines, the band playing, "See, the Conquering Hero comes," with variations.

Mr. Byewilwuffa, who exposed himself almost recklessly the whole time to fire, riding about here and there with the view of procuring information, left the column as they passed through the civil lines and repaired to his house, where he found the inmates had made themselves comfortable for the night, and had gone to sleep. Ensign Hughes remained at his post, sitting on the compound wall, still smoking cigars. The judge and collector had both fallen asleep; the one in the neem, the other in the peepul tree; and the five chuprassees had followed their example, lying at full length upon the ground at

the foot of the trees. The judge's attendants were, however, rudely awakened by that gentleman in his sleep shifting his position, and so falling down, when he alighted upon the five chuprassees, who made a great deal out of the story afterwards, and spread the report that the "hazoor" had been struck by a spent ball, and might have hurt himself severely in his fall, had not his faithful slaves caught him in their arms.

The following is a copy of the despatch forwarded by Colonel Moodle, and contains the official, and therefore the correct account of the affair; although it will be seen that it differs in no material point from the account I have given, but enters of course less into detail.

I must explain, that the Budgepore command was at this time a sort of semi-independent command; that is to say, Colonel Moodle, who commanded the station without having the rank of a brigadier, corresponded direct with the Major General commanding the division.

Budgepore, July 10th, 18—.
No. 73674.

From

LIEUTENANT COLONEL A. M. MOODLE,
Commanding 77th Native (Light) Infantry
To

CAPTAIN GRAMPION NORVAL,
Assistant Adjutant General,
Nursingpore Division.

SIR,

1. I have the honour to report, for the information of Major General Cradle, commanding the Nursingpore division, that a dangerous insurrection having broken out in Budgepore on the 7th instant, M. Byewilwuffa, C. S., Commissioner and Governor-General's Agent, sent a requisition to me to proceed to the spot, with the 77th Native (Light) Infantry, under my command, and aid the civil authorities.

2. Accordingly, I marched from the parade ground about 8 P.M. on the 7th instant, with 800 bayonets, 40 rounds per man in pouch, and 200 in reserve.

3. The reserve ammunition did not follow the column, as directed, in consequence of the absence of the Commissariat Gomashtah in charge of the Government camels, who had gone to a wedding.

4. I halted the column in the civil station

for the purpose of detaching Ensign Hughes with No. 8 Company, 77th Native (Light) Infantry, to protect the civil residents, the Government records and treasure.

5. I have the honour to record here my high sense of the very efficient manner in which Ensign Hughes conducted these operations. Owing to the judicious measures adopted by that officer the lives of the civil residents were protected, the Government records preserved, and two lacs of treasure saved to the State.

6. After detaching Ensign Hughes upon this duty, I proceeded with the remainder of the 77th Native (Light) Infantry, now reduced to 720 bayonets, to the focus of the insurrection, the city of Budgepore.

7. Upon the approach of the column, the enemy, who had previously taken up their position in the open plain near the city, whence they deputed bodies of men to fire and plunder the bungalows of the civil station, retreated, to take up a stronger and much more formidable position within the city itself.

8. I would mention here, that throughout the whole of the operations that followed, I was accompanied by Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, C. S., who, in spite of a heavy fire, was unceasing in his efforts to procure information.

9. Having reason to believe that the enemy were now determined to oppose us with street-

fighting,—the most difficult military operation to conduct effectually with native troops, owing to their high spirit and generally uncontrollable ardour in the field and when under fire,—I detached two companies, Nos. 5 and 6, under Lieutenants Grimstone and Stokes, to proceed on either flank of the city in skirmishing order, taking advantage of such shelter as might be afforded by the suburbs and the cultivation, with instructions to make good their advance and clear the ground of such bodies of the enemy as might be lurking behind the walls and in buildings, and cultivation round the city.

10. Having seen this movement in progress, I formed up No. 1 company under my own command; and after firing a well-directed volley at the roofs and upper storeys of the houses of the main street, charged through the street and swept it completely from end to end.

11. After clearing the city, I halted on the opposite side in tolerably open ground, where for some time I was exposed to a pretty constant fire from both flanks. In imminent danger of being cut off if I allowed the enemy to gather strength from confidence and approach too close, I faced my rear rank to the rear, which thus became their front, and maintained a steady fire from right to left.

12. This effectually quelled the enemy. He retreated with such rapidity as to prevent me

from following him up, from my inability to discover the direction in which he had retreated.

13. In spite of the rapidity of his retreat, the rebels carried away with them the whole of their killed and wounded, which, to judge from the nature of the fire that we kept up, must have been very numerous.

14. Upon finding that the operations detailed above had completely succeeded in their object, I, with the concurrence of Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa, moved off the ground, which a single company of the 77th Native (Light) Infantry had so gallantly won and bravely held against overwhelming odds, and rejoined the main column, which, I forgot to remark, I had left drawn up in quarter-distance column, under command of Captain Chashma, about two hundred yards from the entrance to the city.

15. I was here in due time rejoined by Lieutenants Grimstone and Stokes, with the men under their command. A report from these officers, detailing the operations conducted so efficiently and successfully by them, accompanies this letter.

16. It is not to be expected that military operations requiring the dislodgement of an enemy well provided with arms and ammunition, from a post so strong as the walls and houses of a native city, could be conducted without some casualties. And, I regret to add,

that my loss was severe. In No. 1 Company I had seventy-six men wounded; twenty-six severely, three or four I fear mortally, and the rest slightly. The precision of the fire, and the effective nature of the charge, is shown by the fact, that the only four men in this detachment who escaped altogether were the four men in the rear.

17. Many of the wounds are severe bayonet thrusts, the others mostly contusions from spent balls.

18. The enemy had no artillery.

19. In Nos. 5 and 6 Companies, that were engaged in operations on the two flanks of the city, there were no casualties beyond a few severe contusions from spent balls.

20. It is now my pleasing duty to bring to the notice of the Major-General those individual members of the force whose behaviour on the occasion was such as to call forth my warmest encomiums, and to suggest the hope that the Major-General will be good enough to bring their names to the favourable notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the Government of India.

21. My second in command, Captain Chashma, ably held the position entrusted to him with the main column. He was well supported by Lieutenant Higginbottom, and

Ensign Scattersmall, of whose conduct he speaks most favourably.

22. The eminent services performed so efficiently by Ensign Hughes, whose gallantry and coolness is only equalled by the modesty with which he declaims all merit for his services, I have already touched upon.

23. Lieutenants Grimstone and Stokes deserve my warmest commendation, for the distinguished manner in which they carried out the difficult and arduous duties entrusted to them. The Major-General, being an officer of much experience, knows too well for me to enlarge upon it, the difficulty of dislodging an enemy strongly posted in the suburbs of a native city.

24. Ensign Peajacket, who led No. 1 Company, under my immediate orders, behaved most gallantly. The manner in which, sword in hand, he headed the detachment through the street of Budgepore, exposed to a heavy galling fire, cannot be too highly spoken of.

25. Subadars Pandy Tewary, Tewary Pandy, Chowbey Pandy, Pandy Chowbey, Tewary Pandy Chowbey, Chowbey Pandy Tewary, Ajoodia Tewary, Hunnooman Chuckemup Doorbijie Runamak, and Seetal Lickemup, behaved in a soldier-like and most exemplary manner. Cool under fire, they evinced that

presence of mind which in a body of native officers is the sure prelude to success.

26. Jemadars (here follow the names of ten jemadars, which I need not transcribe), were equally as worthy of commendation as their immediate superiors.

27. It would be impossible for me by any words I could use, to do adequate justice to the gallant and steady conduct of havildars—(native sergeants) (here follow the names of forty havildars.)

28. Equally praiseworthy was the behaviour of the following non-commissioned officers (here follow the names of all the naiks or native corporals in the regiment.)

29. Quartermaster-Sergeant Grimes made the most efficient arrangements for the reception of the ammunition camels, which, however, did not arrive.

30. To Sergeant-Major Russell I am deeply indebted, for the efficient manner in which, at the head of the convalescents, he remained in his bungalow, and held out the position at the same time that he protected the lines, the quarter-guard, the rear-guard, the bells of arms, and the hospital.

31. For these services I trust I may be excused, if I venture to suggest that Sergeant-Major Russell might not be unaptly rewarded with a commission.

32. Of the medical arrangements, it is impossible for me to speak too highly. Assistant-Surgeon Pickemup was at his post the whole time, having taken up an excellent position under cover of a wall, where he was ready to attend to the wounded and relieve their sufferings. As it was a sultry night, the Assistant-Surgeon had had the forethought to come provided with a stock of iced water, which, with the spirits he also had in readiness, was of the utmost service in relieving the thirst of the wounded men.

33. The dooly bearers behaved in a manner that is quite beyond all praise. As there are only two and a-half allowed by regulation to each dooly, and only one dooly (as we had not time, so sudden was the emergency that called us into the field, to get our service complement), considerable difficulty was experienced in making the necessary arrangements, which, nevertheless, the Assistant-Surgeon did succeed in making most effectually, for the accommodation of all the wounded.

34. It may not perhaps be out of place, and I trust I shall not be considered overstepping the limits of my duty, if I bring to the notice of the Major-General, for subsequent reference to Government, should the Major-General consider my suggestions worthy of such reference, that the allowance by regulation of two and a-

half men to each dooly is occasionally productive of some inconvenience, especially when a regiment is called upon suddenly, as on the present occasion, to take the field.

35. I have the honour to annex official returns of killed and wounded, and to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

AUGUSTUS MAXIMILIAN MOODLE,

Commanding 77th Native (Light) Infantry.

Return of killed and wounded in the 77th Native (Light) Infantry, in the military operations at Budgepore:—

	Killed	0
Wounded {	Mortally	4
	Severely	26
	Slightly	56

Miscellaneous: — Band-master DeSouza knocked into the middle of the big drum.

Enclosure.

From

No. 1.

LIEUTENANT GRIMSTONE,

Commanding No. 5 Company,

77th Native (Light) Infantry.

To

LIEUTENANT STICKLEBAT,

Adjutant, 77th N. L. I.,

Budgepore, July 10, 18—

SIR,

I have the honour to report that in pursuance of verbal instructions from Lieutenant-

Colonel Moodle, commanding the regiment, on the night of the 7th July, No. 5 company under my command advanced in skirmishing order to the right of the city of Budgepore, with orders to sweep the right flank of the city and clear the suburbs.

The difficult nature of the ground, consisting of brick walls, gardens, garden houses and occasional cultivation, rendered it necessary to proceed with the utmost caution. The enemy had a very strong position, and so effectually were they concealed under cover of the walls and the cultivation, that during the whole of the operations they effectually succeeded in securing themselves from view. The admirable behaviour, however, of the men of No. 5 company under my command enables me to report a most successful accomplishment of the object intended to be effected by our advance. Making good our ground inch by inch we proceeded without a single check from the spot where we left the main column right round the right flank of the city in skirmishing order, firing as we advanced, till we reached the extremity of the city walls. Here, for some time, a very sharp fire was maintained.

The enemy retreated so rapidly as to render hopeless any attempt to overtake them. They also succeeded in carrying away with them the whole of their killed and wounded, which, judg-

ing from the rapidity and precision of the fire kept up, must have been very great.

I have the honour to bring to the notice of the officer commanding, the names of the following non-commissioned officers and men of No. 5 Company, who especially distinguished themselves upon this occasion. (Here follow the names of the havildars, naicks, and all the men of No. 5 Company.)

I have the honour to annex an official return of the casualties in the company under my command.

And to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SULPHUR GRIMSTONE, *Lieut.*,

Commanding No. 5 Company, 77th N. L. I.

Return of killed and wounded in No. 5 Company at the battle of Budgepore on the night of the 7th July, 18—

	Killed	0
Wounded {	Mortally	0
	Severely	0
	Slightly	0
Total		10

Lieutenant Stoke's despatch was the same as Lieutenant Grimstone's, *mutatis mutandis*, except that his return of casualties was a good

deal more serious than that of No. 5 Company.

The results of this affair as concerns the officers and the regiment engaged were as follows :—

Lieutenant-Colonel Moodle was made a C.B., Captain Chashma obtained his brevet majority. All the native officers received the order of the Star of India—I mean the Order of British India, and the 77th Native (Light) Infantry were allowed to carry the name “Budgepore” upon their colours, and were to be known henceforward by the distinctive appellation of the “Governor-General’s Own.” While Sergeant-Major Russell was rewarded with an ensign’s commission.

Now it so happened that the report of Mr. Byewilwuffa representing everything at Budgepore as *couleur de rose* was accidentally delayed in transit. It consequently reached the Court of Directors at the same time as the subsequent report detailing the military operations. You might, perhaps, run away with the notion that the Court of Directors would not be very well pleased at receiving on one and the same day two reports varying so materially as did the two official documents from Mr. Byewilwuffa. But the fact is the discrepancy proved the stepping-stone to Mr. Byewilwuffa’s attainment of the Lieutenant-Governorship. For, argued the

Directors, this officer has shown a marvellous degree of penetration, and a prudence which cannot be too highly commended, in that he has forwarded the official reports in so convenient a form, a form which enabled the Honourable Court to suppress altogether one set of despatches and to lay the other before the proprietors, the public, and the House of Commons. Whether the second report containing the account of the military operations, should be published or not, depended upon whether the morning papers next day contained any allusion to them. The *Times*, however, was silent. The fact is that an account of the battle of Budgepore had been sent to it and to the *Daily News*, but nothing having been previously known of the existence of any causes likely to eventuate in military operations, the *Times* thought it a hoax, and before publishing anything determined to make enquiries at the India House. The reply to these enquiries was that no account of any military operations had been received with the last Indian Mail. So the *Times* was silent, and the *Daily News*, which waited to see what the *Times* said, was silent too.

Mr. Byewilwuffa had thus, as it appeared, helped the Court out of a dilemma, and saved it from the disagreeable duty of announcing unpleasant news. Which conduct recommended itself so strongly to them that in their next

despatch to India they directed that Mr. Byewilwuffa should be nominated to the Lieutenant-Governorship of the province on the first vacancy.

This was one result. The other result was the order to quarter for the future a European regiment at Budgepore, and so barracks were ordered and estimates called for.

THE HISTORY OF THE BARRACKS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMMITTEE PROCEED TO SELECT A SITE FOR BARRACKS.

I HAVE related in a previous chapter the circumstances that led to the location of a European regiment at Budgepore; that is to say, to the order for barracks to be erected. And as the first step, how estimates and plans were called for.

The reader, perhaps, may ask how it was that the preliminary step was taken so long before the design was carried out; for at least two years elapsed from the date of the occurrence related in the last chapter, to the period when the committee assembled to select a site for the barracks.

The fact is, the estimate had to go before the Military Board, and the Board being at that

time occupied in a very important investigation, the estimates were laid aside till the more pressing business was completed.

It was the practice in those days, as I dare say many of my readers will recollect, for every regiment in the Company's army to send in twice a year, on the 1st May and the 1st November, what was called a half-yearly return. This was a return of all the arms, accoutrements, ammunition, camp equipage, &c., attached to the regiment. There were eight columns in this return : three showing the articles with the regiment up to date of last half-yearly return, "serviceable," "repairable," and "unserviceable." Then there were two columns, "received and expended" during the past half year ; and three more columns, showing what were then in store, "serviceable," "unserviceable," and "repairable." These returns were very carefully examined by the Assistant Secretary to the Military Board, who drew his pay and staff salary of about seven hundred a month besides. They were then examined by seven baboos, who in regular gradation as 1st assistant, 2nd assistant, and so on, aided the Assistant Secretary in his duties. If any discrepancy in the figures was observed, it was pointed out to the Assistant Secretary, who brought it to the notice of the Deputy Secretary. who reported it to the Secretary, who laid it before the Board.

Now it chanced that the half-yearly return sent in from the 77th Regiment Native Light Infantry, the very same corps that so distinguished itself at the battle of Budgepore, as has been reported above in these Chronicles two years before, had a discrepancy. Under the head, "Scabbard Bayonet Musket," present at the termination of the half-year preceding, there were 1356. None were down as received or expended during the year; and in the column of articles in store at the date of the return there appeared 1355. There was, therefore, one missing!

The matter was reported to the officer commanding the 77th N. L. I., who referred it to the Interpreter and Quarter Master, Lieutenant Jenkins; who replied that, in taking over charge from his predecessor, he had signed a receipt, certainly, for 1356 bayonet scabbards, but in taking stock he had found there were actually only 1355; so he had entered the exact number. As he was to blame for the slight inaccuracy, he was quite ready to reimburse the Government the value of the article lost. A new bayonet scabbard was priced eight annas, or one shilling; as this was an old and unserviceable one, its probable value was about three annas, or fourpence-halfpenny.

This method of settling the matter, however, did not at all satisfy the Military Board; and

after an enormous deal of official correspondence the whole case was sent up to the Commander-in-Chief. Sir Amethyst Jones at that time held the appointment. Sir Amethyst Jones consulted Lady Jones, Lady Jones consulted the Adjutant General, and the Adjutant General consulted the Judge Advocate General; and again the case was returned to the Military Board.

In the meantime one of the seven baboos in the Secretary's office had discovered, in looking over some musty old records, that the number of bayonet scabbards, 1356, was the number which was inserted in the half-yearly return of the regiment on the 1st November, 1806, and that on the 1st May, 1806, the number was 1355. The discovery was duly laid before the Board, who directed the whole of the returns to be examined between that date and the present year. This involved a great deal of trouble, because many of the records were mislaid, and many missing; and the records in the offices of the Assistant and Deputy Quarter-Masters General all over the country had to be searched and ransacked. It was owing to this that the estimates and plans of the Budgepore barracks became forgotten; indeed, they were overlooked altogether.

I will now, in a few words, relate how it came to pass that the estimates and plans were recovered from the oblivion into which they had fallen.

You will recollect that I stated at the commencement of this Chronicle, that it was in the time of Mr. Kist Byewilwuffa that the barracks were built; that is, when this eminent official was Lieutenant Governor. You will also recollect that it was when he was Commissioner of Budgepore, some years before, that the insurrection took place, which was followed by the battle of Budgepore, and that again was followed by the determination of Government, upon Mr. Byewilwuffa's report, to quarter a European corps at the station.

The overland mail one day brought the Hon. Kist Byewilwuffa a letter, which caused him at least five minutes' thought. It was from an old friend of his family, Lady Cecilia Toddleton, and ran thus:—

MY DEAR MR. BYEWILWUFFA,

My nephew, James Stuart, has been now five years in India. He is in the Engineers. In what part of India he may be, I have not the least idea, but I am told he went to Bengal some five years ago; and as he has not been back since, I presume he is there now. Ellen tells me he has not got on at all, having no one out there to give him a helping hand. If you can do anything for him, please do.

I do not know enough about military affairs in India to suggest any particular line in which

his interests may best be served. But if you could make the poor boy a general, or a colonel, or something of that sort, I dare say it would be as much as he could look for.

Clara and Adelaide were over here in the spring; they have promised to come and see me at Christmas, and I hope Joe will spend part of his Christmas holidays at the hall.

Believe me, yours sincerely,

CECILIA.

Clara and Adelaide were Mrs. Byewilwuffa's two elder daughters. Lady Toddleton had a very pretty house and estate in Sussex, and a comfortable income of about ten thousand a year. Mr. Byewilwuffa, therefore, was very glad to keep on good and friendly terms with the kind old lady, who in their younger days, so it was said, had been a sort of flame of his. It was no small advantage to his girls to have the *entrée* of Lady Toddleton's house, where they not only enjoyed their visits very much, but met all the best county families.

I must here, at the risk of digressing unwarrantably, pause for an instant, to relate how it came to pass that Mr. Byewilwuffa had a son with such a plebeian name as Joe. I might as well relate the little incident here, otherwise I may forget it altogether. For, not only was Mr. Byewilwuffa's son named Joe, but Joe was

his eldest son, and this is how he came to be called by that name.

Being on very intimate terms with Mr. Byewilwuffa, I was asked to stand proxy godfather when the infant Joe, the son and heir of the house of Byewilwuffa, was christened. The name was duly given to me beforehand, and it was to be Hastings Clive Prinsep. What could have made me forget myself I cannot tell. But my head was running on all sorts of nonsense during the time the service was being read, which was exceedingly wrong, I know; but sometimes you have not that power over your thoughts which you ought to exercise. And to tell the real, honest truth, I was in my mind quizzing my good friend Byewilwuffa a little, and thinking that such a complete, thoroughbred official as he was, ought to give his children appropriate Christian names. So, when the chaplain turned his head toward me, and said abruptly, "name this child," I inadvertently replied, "Jo hukm;" a formula, meaning "as you order," in the mouth of every native whenever he receives anything in the shape of instructions, from his European superior. Upon my saying this, Short, that was the chaplain's name, went on with the service "Jo hukm," &c., and Mr. Byewilwuffa's son and heir became "Jo Hukm Byewilwuffa."

Now you will, I know, say at once that such

a thing was totally impossible, because Mr. Byewilwuffa would have himself perceived the mistake in time to stop the chaplain. But, if you had ever heard Short read the service, you would not say so. Short was his name, and short his nature. He was as thorough-bred an Indian chaplain as Mr. Byewilwuffa was in his way an official. I do not mean so much in respect of his social qualities, as his professional habits and capabilities. Socially speaking, he was a valuable member of society. He had a good seat on horseback; looked after the Budgepore pack, about which I may have something to say one of these days, was a capital hand at billiards and whist. If you might judge of the importance he attached to his clerical duties by the amount of time he spent over them, you might say he hardly gave them their due weight. He made a bet once in my hearing, that he would get through the morning service, sermon and all, in seventeen minutes and a-half, and the bet having been taken, he set the clerk to time him. I need hardly say he won. You required to "look alive," as they say, on going to church, when Short performed the service. He was a little man, and very rapid in his motions. He had a method of locomotion more like hopping than anything else. He hopped up the aisle into the reading desk, gabbled away the preliminary exhortation, down on his knees, up again, jumped

through the psalms, shot through the lessons, down on his knees again, away through the prayers with most irreverent haste, up again, out of the reading desk, up into the pulpit, down again and back to the vestry, so that you really felt as if you could not draw a breath from the time you entered the church till you left it. So the fact was, that Short having got the name from me, rattled through the remainder of the service, and was at the end of it before Mr. Byewilwuffa, whose presence of mind totally deserted him, had time to realize the mistake, or the necessity of correcting it. Then, when all was over, with a reproachful look at me, he followed Short into the vestry. Not an instant scarcely, as it seemed to us, had elapsed, since Short had completed the service and retired, and we had rejoined him in the vestry; yet, in that short space of time, he had half divested himself of his surplice, and was lighting a cheroot, the clerk holding a lighted coal in a small tongs, the church-bearer standing behind with Mr. Short's cheroot box. Mr. Byewilwuffa remonstrated, but in vain. He insisted that the intended Christian name of his son should be inserted in the register, but Mr. Short wouldn't hear of it. And the aggrieved father was forced to content himself with the reflection that the initials J. H. would look like Joseph Henry; and for the rest, if his son went

through life by the name of "Joe," it would always be supposed that it was the usual abbreviation for Joseph.

But to return. The Lieutenant-Governor had Lady Cecilia's letter in his hand, and was still cogitating upon the contents, when Mr. Khas Mowza, the Secretary came in with some papers for signature. After they were signed, Mr. Byewilwuffa asked his Secretary if there was any vacancy in the Public Works Department in any situation which might be appropriately filled by an Engineer officer of about five years' standing. Mr. Khas Mowza couldn't recollect, but intimated that if His Honour wanted to oblige any of his friends, it would not be difficult to recommend the institution of some public work. It was very desirable, he thought, that another canal should be undertaken, from the Ram Jumna into the Budgepore district. I say "another," because one had already been executed; but as in its construction it seemed to have been designed for taking water up hill, it had not succeeded so well as might have been expected. Mr. Byewilwuffa thought the Supreme Government would hardly sanction another canal, at any rate till the bed of the old one had got filled up somehow. Mr. Khas Mowza then suggested a branch from the Grand Trunk Road. Mr. Byewilwuffa enquired where the branch was to

run to, but Mr. Khas Mowza thought that was a secondary consideration altogether, and that it might be led round the neighbouring villages over an area of a few thousand square miles, so as to develop the resources of the district. Mr. Byewilwuffa, however, said he was not prepared to recommend that, as no progress having as yet been made with the Grand Trunk Road at all in the province, it might look premature to commence upon the branches. Mr. Khas Mowza then suggested the erection of a masonry pier and landing-place at Gurmuckteser, with wharves and steps for men to go down to the water, and a covered way for women; for, as the Secretary suggested, it was very desirable to prevent indiscriminate bathing by both sexes at one spot. After some discussion, Mr. Byewilwuffa rejected this proposition, on account of the large outlay that would be required. Mr. Khas Mowza then suggested a new church at Budgepore. To this also the Lieutenant-Governor had some objection, "but," said he, "this allusion to Budgepore reminds me that some years ago barracks for a European regiment at Budgepore were sanctioned and estimates called for; what became of those estimates, Mowza, and why were the works never commenced?"

Mr. Khas Mowza said he did'nt know, but

would see if there was any record in the office that would give the required information.

The result of this conversation was, that after about three months' correspondence the estimates were disinterred from some crowded shelf where the records of the Military Board were kept, and in due time the necessary orders were issued for the construction of the barracks, Lieutenant James Stuart being appointed by Government to supervise the works.

Stuart's senior officers gnashed their teeth at so good an appointment being thrown away upon so young a man, but they did not wonder at it, for his connection with Lady Cecilia Toddleton was well known in the regiment.

The next step was the selection of a site for the barracks. And for this a committee was appointed,—the members of which were the Superintending Surgeon of the Budgepore division Dr. Tincture, the Brigadier, whose name was Haversack, and the senior Engineer officer on the spot, Major Wrangler of the Engineers. the Commissioner of Budgepore being requested to attend. The committee was exceedingly well selected for the purpose. None of the members, except Major Wrangler, had ever had anything more to do with European troops than just seeing them on parade or in barracks. Brigadier Haversack had been thirty-eight years

with a native regiment, and only recently promoted, and there were no European troops at all under his command. Dr. Tincture was a little aged. He had been an able man in his time, and had written two or three works to prove that malaria was generated by vegetation. This was his favourite theory, and one that he carried out in practice as far as he could. He had all the trees, shrubs, flowers and plants of every kind rooted up from his garden, and the grass and weeds that made their appearance occasionally on the surface, regularly scraped away directly they showed their faces above ground. During the rainy season I have seen as many as thirty men at a time in his compound, all engaged in waging war with nature and repressing its rather energetic efforts to clothe the ground with verdure.

If he had been allowed he would, of course, have carried out this principle in the cantonment also, but this was put a stop to by the Brigadier, who had a contrary opinion, and thought the growth of trees and vegetation most beneficial. Of late years Dr. Tincture had become rather crotchety. He was getting old, and ought to have been invalided or pensioned. One of his quaint conceptions that every now and then seized upon his mind was, that he was a heap of grain. And when under the influence of this peculiar delusion, it was

sometimes painful, at the same time ludicrous, to witness the state of alarm into which he was thrown if a horse, or a cow, sheep or goat approached him.

Major Wrangler had the most hearty contempt, as you may suppose, for his coadjutors. He was a thoroughly scientific man, devoted to his profession, in the prime of youth and vigour, and looked with some disdain, as I am sorry to say young men sometimes are prone to do, upon the infirmities of old age and those labouring under them. Conjoined with this disdain for age, was a somewhat similar feeling for every one who did not belong to the Engineers. The feeling was, you will allow, very foolish in both cases, because in the first it is folly for us to despise that which most likely will one day be ours; and which, if it is not, we shall wish most heartily it might be. We must either grow old, or die before we grow old. And in the latter case we should certainly prefer the other alternative. To despise old age, therefore, is foolish, if no harsher term can be applied to it. I speak feelingly on this point, being an old man myself, and having occasion sometimes to think that if the present generation of young men were a little more mindful of the principle "seniores priores," than they are, it might be better. But let that pass. I will not moralise, my business is to tell stories.

As to the other of Major Wrangler's notions, his contempt for men who did not belong to the Engineers, this was equally silly, for what would become of the world if every body was an Engineer? Why, it would be scooped inside out, and there would be no place left to live in.

The first morning the committee met they resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that the best plan would be for each member to make an expedition by himself, riding or driving or walking, just as he might fancy, and take a look at the ground. They might then meet and compare notes, and any particular spot that appeared eligible to any two of them, might then be visited by the committee collectively. So they all set out, Major Wrangler going across country on horseback, Brigadier Haversack in a buggy and Dr. Tincture in a palanquin. *

Two of the members of the committee were, however, destined to meet without appointment. For as Major Wrangler was returning home after scouring the country in all directions for about fifteen miles, he espied what at a distance looked like a buggy hood standing upon the ground. On reaching the spot he found it was, indeed, a buggy that had sunk in soft earth up to the axles and a little over, the horse, of course, being proportionately enveloped also, that is to say, being stuck fast up to his hips.

As Major Wrangler rode up, the groom, who was standing up inside the buggy, leaning against the splashboard, made signs to him to beware of something and to advance cautiously. So he called out, "What's the matter?"

"Who's that?" said Brigadier Haversack, thrusting his head out through the opening in the hood behind. "Oh, is that you, Wrangler? Ride back to cantonments, that's a good fellow, as hard as you can, and get some assistance. Desire Cameltrunk to send out an elephant and ropes with the least possible delay. I have got stuck fast here. And I'm afraid the buggy is momentarily sinking further."

"But how on earth did you get there, Brigadier? There is no road here."

"Road! of course there's no road. If we confine ourselves to beaten tracks, how shall we ever do our duty properly? I came here in accordance with our resolution to look for a site for the barracks. I thought this plot of ground would do admirably, and was driving across it, when all of a sudden I got into this slough of despond; and here I am, you see. Make haste, there's a good fellow; send the elephant."

"And was this the place you selected for a site for barracks?"

But Major Wrangler did not wait for a reply. He had recognised the spot and understood the

state of affairs, and felt really anxious to get assistance as speedily as possible.

The Brigadier's position was a great deal more awkward than he himself believed.

The plot of ground he had approved was a spot which had been selected a year or two before by a committee of civilians for a grand "sanitary" experiment. Mr. Byewilwuffa had directed three of the commissioners of districts to meet together, and consult as to the best method of disposing of the filth and refuse of jails and large cities; and they had unanimously resolved to try the plan of digging an enormous pit in the ground, some miles outside the city of Budgepore, as an experiment, and there depositing the matter which it was deemed desirable to get rid of. The pit, after being filled, had been covered over with a layer of earth; and it was thus, in this eligible site for barracks, that the Brigadier had met with this mishap.

The circumference of the pit was about sixty yards, and its depth twenty feet. The treacherous soil had borne the superincumbent weight of the buggy for a yard or two, and then had given way all round. The horse floundered dreadfully; the Brigadier whipped him on, and he managed to extricate himself and the buggy by struggling on to a portion of the soil which happened to be a little firmer than the rest. And there they were upon an island, as it were,

in the centre of a bog or slough, which, however, gave uncomfortable premonitory symptoms of breaking up; and already the horse's legs and half the wheels had become imbedded.

Major Wrangler thought he perceived symptoms of the earth altogether giving way; in which case nothing could have saved the Brigadier, the syce and the horse, from destruction.

Such a fate was too horrible to contemplate; so, although his contempt for the Brigadier was so great that he really thought it would be no loss to the world if he was totally submerged, yet better feelings overcame him; and, setting spurs to his horse, he never drew rein till he reached Captain Cameltrunk's door.

Captain Cameltrunk was, you recollect, the Executive Commissariat officer of Budgepore; and when Major Wrangler arrived he was in the bath,—a large swimming bath in the compound in which Captain Cameltrunk and his friends disported themselves in the morning and evening during the warm weather. It was a good-sized bath, being fifty feet long and twenty-five wide, and seven feet deep. It was kept filled from a well close by, the water being drawn up by Government, otherwise called commissariat, bullocks, which, by the regular exercise thus afforded them, were kept in good health. When Major Wrangler mounted the steps and entered

the bath room, he had some difficulty in distinguishing his friend Cameltrunk from among forty other individuals, all in the same costume exactly, that is to say,—well, all in their bathing costume, which was very simple and unpretending, and remarkably uniform. Of the forty individuals in the water, at least twenty were poised upon mussucks, or inflated sheep skins, in which water is carried in the east, and which, when filled with air and put in on all fours upon the water, float upon the surface, so that bathers can sit astride upon them and paddle themselves about as if they were riding on horseback.

This is a very favourite amusement with Anglo-Indians; and various are the sports, feats of skill in horsemanship, if I may use the word, to which the use of this innocent method of recreation gives rise. Wrangler, after a while, discovered Cameltrunk; but it was no wonder he had a little difficulty in finding him out amid such a crowd, for he was floating on his back, with a lighted cigar in his mouth, his legs extended at right angles, straight up in the air, and balancing on the up-turned soles of his feet a “mussuck,” or inflated sheep skin, with a little native boy seated on the top. This peculiar attitude he had assumed by reason of a wager laid with a brother officer, that he would maintain that position a certain time. At Wrangler’s call, how-

ever, and on hearing that some business of importance required his immediate attention, he surrendered the mussuck and the little boy to his neighbour, who took them upon his back, and swam to the side of the bath.

“What is it, old fellow?”

“The Brigadier is in a deuce of a mess; I don’t know how the devil to get him out of it. I want you to let me have an elephant and some ropes, directly.”

He then proceeded to describe the position in which he had left the Brigadier. Cameltrunk, meantime, had scrambled up the side of the bath, and was drying himself with a towel, making that peculiar noise, half hissing, half whistling, that all ostlers do when they are cleaning horses, and some other men when they are cleaning themselves. Cameltrunk was rapid in his movements, and by the time Wrangler had finished his story was already half dressed.

“I’d send the elephant with pleasure,” said he; “but I don’t see how it’s to be done. Who’s to sign the indent?”

“Sign the indent; why you don’t mean to say, that when the Brigadier is in danger of losing his life by a fate too horrible to think of, you stickle about an indent!”

“I can’t help it, Wrangler. I’m very sorry for the Brigadier, but I couldn’t let the elephant

go without having the indent signed, and it must be signed by the officer commanding the station."

"Can't the second in command sign it? Colonel Sungeen, won't his signature do?"

"Why, man, you know as well as I do, that it won't do," said Cameltrunk, irritated by his friend's ignorance of standing orders—"of course it won't do; Brigadier Haversack commands the station."

"He won't command it much longer. Well, look here, you order the elephant down sharp and a coil of ropes. I'll get the indent drawn out meanwhile, and we'll make the Brigadier sign it before he is pulled out. Will that do?"

"Well, I suppose, under the circumstances, I should be justified in reading the regulations so as to admit of that arrangement; but we cannot supply our ropes, you must get them from the barrack master's yard."

"Oh, all right, that will be very easily done," said Wrangler, intimating that in the Engineer's department there were no fetters put upon the discharge of obvious duties by a punctilious adherence to silly regulations.

So leaving Cameltrunk, who by this time was dressed, and was already surrounded by a crowd of nude inquirants asking while they dried themselves what the deuce was up, Wrangler hastened off to the Brigade-Major's

office to tell the baboo to make out an emergent indent in duplicate for an elephant "on command"—thus it was expressed by the rules of the service—and then rode down to the barrack master's yard, which was in his own department, but not presided over immediately by him, but by an officer junior to him.

Here he found Sergeant Stack, the Barrack Master Sergeant, a good trustworthy non-commissioned officer, who had been in the department for eleven years; and had sole charge of every thing. His pay was 120 rupees or £12 a month, and he was so thrifty that he had *saved* enough to build himself one of the best houses in the place, where he lived in state and style quite equal to that of the Brigadier himself.

Here he got a coil of good strong rope which had been sent from England for the church bells. This was sent up to his house. As soon as the necessary arrangements were complete, he got into his buggy, and taking with him the ropes and a couple of very long bamboos, drove to Camel-trunk's house to pick up that officer, who also got into the buggy with the indent, a portable inkstand and a pen, and the two drove off together; the elephant had preceded them, having been sent off at once with orders to the mahout, or driver to make all possible speed to the place where the Brigadier was imbedded.

When they got there, what was Wrangler's

horror to see no trace any longer of the Brigadier's buggy and horse, or of the syce, or the Brigadier himself!

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "how shocking; we are too late!"

"Who on earth will sign the indent!" was Cameltrunk's remark.

But Wrangler did not hear it. He had leapt out of the buggy, and beckoning to a labourer, whom he recollected having seen near the spot before, to come up, he advanced to the edge of the morass or pit and began sounding with one of the long bamboo poles. His object, of course, was to find out where the buggy had sunk, so as to get out the vehicle and recover the bodies of the unfortunate Brigadier and his servant. But without avail. He toiled and toiled till the perspiration (for the sun was fiercely hot) streamed down his face, but no trace of the lost ones could be discovered.

It may be as well to state here in a few words what had befallen the Brigadier.

About three minutes after Major Wrangler had ridden away, a zemindar of the neighbourhood, who was called Raja Tukht Sing, came by with one or two followers on an elephant. Seeing the buggy imbedded in the morass, he immediately called to the labourer who was in a field close by, and told him to go to the next village and get a rope. The rope was brought,

and after about half an hour's labour the buggy and its occupants were extricated, and the horse, none the worse for the mishap, except being a good deal bespattered and bedaubed with mud, &c. The Brigadier tendered his hearty thanks for the timely aid thus afforded him, and drove home.

Major Wrangler, at last, being worn out and in despair, sat himself down, and, turning to the labourer (Cameltrunk having remained in the buggy all the while an inactive spectator of the scene), asked him to point out the exact spot to which their researches should be directed. The man indicated the place, which was precisely where Major Wrangler supposed it to be. He then put the question,—

“When did the buggy sink?”

“It did not sink,” replied the man; “it is gone away.”

“Gone!” said Wrangler, leaping to his feet, “Gone! and why didn’t you tell me before?”

Whereupon he took to cuffing the labourer most unmercifully about his head and ears. After giving vent to his feelings in this manner, he rejoined Cameltrunk and told him it was all right, the Brigadier had gone home.

Cameltrunk looked hard at his friend—hard and anxiously. He was afraid he was suffering from aberration of intellect. He had come to him in a most excited state that morn-

ing, and told him a most improbable story, which was utterly uncorroborated by circumstances: he had asked him to "issue" an elephant without an indent, and had ended by beating a labourer who had been patiently rendering him all the assistance in his power.

"Hadn't you better let me drive home?" said Cameltrunk, taking the reins as Wrangler got into the buggy. Wrangler seated himself in silence, and allowed his companion to drive him back to cantonments.

Meantime, for it was now midday, the labourer also went home. His dwelling was a hut, built of mud, and about twelve feet square, plastered inside with mud mixed with cowdung, and containing for furniture an old clumsy cot and an earthen pot for water. His wife was squatting on the ground near a few embers preparing the homely dinner, which consisted of a few cakes made of meal; these she was patting in her hands over the fire. Two small children, perfectly naked, and covered with flies, lay on their stomachs on the floor beside her. That was the labourer's domestic circle, and the description of his home will pass for a description of the home of many tens of millions of the peasantry of India, who, as is well known, are so exceedingly well off under British rule. The head of the family and master of the house, sat down on the ground in the doorway, and his

wife put a pipe into his hands in silence. He took a whiff or two, and then his conversational powers being developed, he told his wife all that had happened that morning, and ended by asking her "And, now, why did the sahib beat me?"

He had been revolving that question in his mind ever since.

"The sahibs always beat every one," said the wife, still patting the cakes,—first on one hand, then on the other.

"You speak like an ignorant woman," said the man. "It is not so. I say, why did the sahib beat me?"

"If I am an ignorant woman, why do you ask me," said the wife, offended.

The labourer, who was a philosopher in his way, saw the force of that remark, and was silent. At last he said, muttering to himself, "One sahib gets into the slough, Raja Takht Sing comes by and sends me to get ropes. I get ropes, and the sahib is taken out. Then the other sahib comes and looks for the first sahib, and when he does not find him he beats me; he is angry because I helped to get the first sahib out."

That was the only conclusion the labourer could arrive at. He was a philosopher, you see; and being aware that effects must have a cause, he endeavoured, in his simple and untutored mind, to trace the connection.

Meantime Cameltrunk and Wrangler drove back in silence, being lost in thought. Cameltrunk, however, was the first to break the silence; and, as he got down, he said:

“Deuced unlucky; who is to sign the indent?”

You see he was a philosopher as well as the labourer: which was the greater philosopher of the two, I leave you to judge.

So Wrangler drove on to the Brigadier's, where he found him at breakfast, and had the pleasure of congratulating him on his escape.

THE HISTORY OF THE BARRACKS.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCES THE READER TO A NATIVE OFFICIAL.

THE mishap which befel one of the members of the committee appointed to select a site for the barracks at Budgepore, as related in the last chapter, did not in any wise damp the ardour of the other members of the committee, or prevent them from doing their duty. There were, in fact, only two sites in the neighbourhood at all suited for the purpose. One was a plateau of high ground, well drained, and well raised above the level of the surrounding country, to the north of the city. The other was a piece of waste land, that is, common land, to the south of the city, which was of a much lower elevation, and consequently during the rainy season very much in the condition of a marsh.

Dr. Tincture and Major Wrangler preferred the northern site: the latter, on account of its elevation and drainage; the former, because it was a bare waste with only one tree upon it. The other members of the committee preferred the lower site, on account of the vegetation, but being outvoted, the committee was directed formally to assemble at the spot selected by Dr. Tincture and Major Wrangler; and Mr. Wasilbakee, the Commissioner, was requested to attend.

I have said there was only one tree on the spot. That tree was a large peepul, that threw its ample and refreshing shade over a hut, and a petty shrine, the one inhabited, and the other tended by a Hindoo fakir of great repute in the neighbourhood for sanctity. The hut was a small shanty, with mud walls and a roof of thatch. The shrine consisted of a small heap of stones, built up in the shape something of a Jewish altar, upon which stood the sacred symbol of the most debased feature of worship in the degenerated Pooranic religion of the Hindoos, called the "lingam."

The whole was surrounded by an enclosure, a thorny hedge about two feet high. The tree grew in the centre, and at the foot of it was a deep well of masonry, down which if you looked you might see at a little distance the roots of the peepul, every now and then appearing from

between the stones that lined the sides of the well ; many of them had been loosened ; some had been displaced altogether, and had fallen down. The water was sweet, and the fakir drove rather a thriving trade by selling the water, a brass lotah full at a time, to travellers and wayfarers, who stopped to rest under the grateful shade of the spreading boughs of the old peepul during the heat of the day. But besides this source of income, the old fakir was constantly resorted to by the city people and others of both sexes, who made him their confidant, and entrusted to his safe keeping many family secrets which were told in confidence, under the seal of confession, as it were, by those who wished to consult him on some affair of importance.

Women particularly resorted to him for advice, when suffering from the curse of barrenness, and many a childless parent had become the possessor of a full quiver, from, it is said, the prayers of the old fakir, and the blessings that followed upon a devout adoration of the small piece of stone that formed the object of attraction to so many devotees.

It so happened, that on the morning when the committee went to inspect the proposed site for the barracks, Shekh Futtoo had mounted his cob and ambled down to the hut to consult the fakir. A wonderful cob was that. Its

body was white, it had red eyes and a pink tail, and its legs below the knees were green. The English reader may feel inclined to be sceptical, and to scout the idea of a horse having a coat of as many different colours as the skin of a chameleon. I can only say that as India is a country of marvels, so have I often seen horses of all colours, white, red, blue, green, and pink and yellow. It is not at all uncommon. How they become so is another matter altogether, the investigation of which belongs to a natural philosopher or a physiologist, not to me.

Nor need the reader quarrel with me because I have related that a Mahomedan gentleman went to consult a Hindoo fakir, for so renowned for sanctity was this fakir, that Mahomedans very frequently resorted to him for advice, although of course they held in righteous abomination the idolatrous symbol that had such charms for the Hindoos.

Shekh Futtoo was in great trouble. Troubles will befall the most prosperous; and, although the Shekh's cup of prosperity was very well filled, and had been so for many years, yet of late he had been heavy at heart, and felt as if evil fate had already marked him out as a victim for her malignity. And the Shekh's cause of trouble was this, that for the first time for twenty years he had failed to twist round his fingers the master whom he had throughout

that time nominally served, and in reality ruled. Was he about to shake himself free from the trammels? Was he about to break the web that had been wound so skilfully round and round him that he could move neither hand nor foot? Forbid it fate! For the Shekh well knew that the day he fell from his post would be an evil day for him. Twenty years he had grown fat and wealthy upon corruption and bribery. For twenty years he had kept the avenues to his employer's ears and eyes. For Mr. Wasilbakee, the Commissioner of Budgepore, had been twenty years in India. As a writer in Writers' Buildings, he had engaged the Shekh as a moonshi. When he became an assistant, he had put him in the office, in a subordinate position at first, but soon managed to get him promoted. As a joint magistrate and a collector, he had employed him as his factotum in different capacities, and finally as commissioner of Budgepore, he found the Shekh as useful, intelligent, honest and faithful a servant of Government, as serishtadar, as he had ever been in the other capacities in which he had served. When he became commissioner, he brought the eminent services of his dependant to the notice of Government, and begged that he might be rewarded with a title, and the Governor-General had consented, and at a durbar held at Agra in 185—, the Hon'ble Mr.

Byewilwuffa conferred on the fortunate recipient the honorary title of Sirdar Bahadoor.

When luck first threw the Shekh in the path of Mr. Wasilbakee, he was a poor man, an adventurer, seeking his fortune in the Presidency. He was now a wealthy man. I don't suppose he could have counted up all his wealth had he tried. He had purchased land and villages in almost all the districts of the province. He had two lacs of rupees in Government paper. He had horses and carriages, and well-built houses in Agra, Delhi, Meerut, and half the great cities in those provinces. All his family were well provided for, one of his sons was a "talookdar," another was a serishtadar in the Sudder Court, and his brother was the confidential moonshi of Mr. Khass Mowza, the Secretary to Government. But the Shekh had not been unmindful of the claims of more distant relatives. His uncles and nephews, his cousins, were all in Government employ, in one capacity or another, and, I need hardly add, that he was held in much esteem by the natives. You need not suppose for a moment that Mr. Wasilbakee had any idea that his friend and confidant was so wealthy and influential as he was. Had he known it, seeing that when he entered his employ he was a poor man, glad to take service for twenty rupees a month, he might have pon-

dered over the strange metamorphosis, and his reflections might have led to some inquiry as to how the man amassed such enormous wealth. But Mr. Wasilbakee had no more idea that Shekh Futtoo, Sirdar Bahadoor, was a wealthy man, than you had before I told you. Men of Mr. Wasilbakee's mental calibre seldom do know anything at all, except what it suits their factotums to let them know, and what comes to them through "the usual channel." Had they known more about the people, we might have been saved some trouble and expense in 1857.

Now that I have told you of this, you will understand why Shekh Futtoo was so much disturbed and alarmed at the otherwise apparently unimportant fact, that for the first time for twenty years Mr. Wasilbakee had proved unmanageable. Divers ways of management had Shekh Futtoo; divers were the arts he employed to gain his ends. You must not suppose that he ever officiously volunteered his advice when unasked, that he ever presumed to differ outright with his employer, much less that he ever ventured to disobey him. No, the Shekh was far too clever to go to work in any such clumsy method, nor did he ever interfere in any matter beyond his province. But enough matter was there within his legitimate province to occupy his attention, and prove a source of ample revenue. If opportunity was slow in

coming, he waited, and it always came. A word, a gentle hint, that he was aware of the secret springs of action in such and such a case, that he could give explanation if asked for, that he had sources of information which he could develop, and he was sure to be applied to.

Not once during the twenty years did Mr. Wasilbakee ever for a moment dream that the Shekh was anything but the pink of honesty. To him, he was a faithful servant, an honest, upright, zealous, indefatigable assistant, and I do not exaggerate in the least when I say that Mr. Wasilbakee would rather have taken the Shekh's opinion upon any matter of law, revenue, and executive duties than that of any other living person. He came at last to consult him on every occasion, to refer to him on every point, to discuss with him every matter that came before him in his official duties. Most unconsciously, he always followed his advice. Once, only, during all that time had he differed from him, and that was what caused the Shekh so much uneasiness, that he determined to consult the Hindoo fakir.

But the reader ignorant of India will be at a loss to understand why the mere fact of Mr. Wasilbakee for once proving unmanageable in the hands of Shekh Futtoo, upon a matter of such trifling importance that I have not thought it necessary to break the thread of my story to

relate it here, why should that have given the good man so much anxiety? It was because the Shekh knew what would happen if he fell into disfavour. If it was once mooted abroad that Shekh Futtoo had been frowned upon by the "great sahib," there was the greatest probability that some one out of the many thousands of those upon whom he had been forced to trample in his career to greatness might raise his head from the dust, and tell the story of his wrongs. While in favour with Mr. Wasilbakce, the brittle fabric of his fair fame and good fortune untouched, no one dare to throw the first stone. There was hardly a central jail in the whole province that did not contain five or six wretched victims of the Shekh's scheming, men whom it was necessary for him to destroy, to crush, in order to secure some prize that he coveted, men who had paid him handsomely in former days for some service he promised to render, suitors probably in some case before his employer, whose cause he promised to win for them. The bribe had been paid, and either because the opposite party had bribed higher, or the cause was not to be won, the disappointed suitor deprived of what he thought his right, and robbed of the money he had paid in bribery, had in an evil moment threatened, unless the money was returned, to disclose the fact to the "sahib." In an instant the Shekh resolved on

action. The next day the discontented client would be in the hands of the police, charged with some criminal offence, tortured till he confessed, and then consigned to jail, from which the head jailor had been well feed never to let him pass out alive.

There was not a record in the revenue office of Budgepore that had not been tampered with, provided that it was of such a nature that any tampering with it could benefit any one who was willing to pay handsomely for that benefit. All this was not accomplished without much risk. Jailors, police, witnesses, chuprassies, all recipients of bribes, were so many trains laid to which the match might at any moment be applied. Two, at least, of the native subordinates of the Commissioner's court were cognizant of the fact of the records of the office being tampered with. Widows whose husbands, orphans whose parents had been put to death by the slow torture of "jail discipline" for the sake of removing a witness, or silencing a complainant, might at any time have poured the tale of woe, oppression and crime into the ear of some European official who would have seen justice done. So you would suppose, reader, if you had never lived in India, never taken the pains to look below the surface; where corruption, and infamy and crime lurk beneath the fair exterior presented to your view. But in reality the truth

was this. Not one of these people, who might have revealed the true state of things, dare utter a word, for to breathe a word against the Shekh was almost certain death to the man bold enough to utter it; and not only death, but death in its most revolting form, and disgrace and ruin to his family.

So have you seen the monarch of the Bengal jungle, the lordly tiger, walking proudly in his domain. At his approach the herd of jackals skulk away into the depths of the forest, and hide themselves lest the eye of the tyrant should flash upon them and mark them out for his prey. No one of that countless host of meaner beasts that haunt the wide domains which the bounteous hand of nature has granted to them all in common, dare even to show its face in the tiger's path. But, one day, the rifle of the hunter wounds the lordly beast. He retires to his fastness to die, to die alone in his majesty, that his craven-hearted subjects shall not see him whom they feared, at whose approach they trembled, lying humbled, weak, powerless. His limbs almost refuse to carry him, but he has reached his lair, and there, weak and exhausted, he lays him down to die alone. But, hark! the scent of the hungry jackal has found him out, the shrill, prolonged yell echoes through the jungle and calls together the skulking confederates by tens and twenties.

Then first one, and then the other approach the majestic form of the wounded monarch of the forest. Unable to resist, he sees the creatures gather round him whom his very look would ere while have scared, and he is torn to pieces while his mangled limbs quiver with vitality in the very jaws of the devourers. Shekh-Futtoo Sirdar Bahadoor, well knew that his word was law. But he knew that if once only the meanest part of the glittering fabric he had built up for himself was to be assailed, the birds would gather from the four winds of heaven to feast on his living carcass. So he was careworn and anxious, and went to consult the fakir.

He knew all this without reading History, but if he had read it, he would have learnt some lessons which would have taught him that his fears were not unfounded.

While the committee were discussing the advantages of the proposed site, the Shekh was consulting his adviser. The coloured cob was tied up to the trunk of the peepul tree, and neither of the European officers on the ground observed it. But the astute Mussulman observed them, and having of course heard of the project of erecting European barracks at Budgepore, he at once guessed what the officers were about, and communicated the result of his observations to his companion. The latter natu-

rally was not very well pleased at the idea of barracks for European soldiers being erected so near his abode, and he foresaw the not very improbable result of the removal of his hut and his shrine, to make way for swine and beef-eating unbelievers in the sanctity of the lingam. This removal must be prevented. He and the Shekh easily understood one another, and when the latter mounted his many-coloured cob to ride home, he had engaged to use his influence to prevent the removal, with the promise of a handsome present if he succeeded, and armed at the same time with one or two potent charms in the shape of iron and brass lockets, enclosing "muntras," or charms, and unintelligible hieroglyphics, which he was directed to wear as an armlet, and which he was assured would have the effect of restoring the confidence of the "sahib," and preventing any ill effect from accruing from the blow already given to his influence.

The committee decided upon the site, the Brigadier having yielded an unwilling consent; it only remained for the Commissioner to enquire if the land was available, and if there was no objection to its being taken up for the purpose. That enquiry he promised to make, immediately upon going to office. With Mr. Wasilbakee "enquiry" meant consulting his serishtadar.

What came of that enquiry will best be learnt from the following letter :—

No. 733.

FROM

THE COMMISSIONER OF

Budgepore.

TO

BRIGADIER HAVERSACK,

President of Special Committee, Budgepore.

February 18, 185—.

SIR,—With reference to the site selected by the Special Committee, of which you are President, for the erection of barracks, I have the honour to inform you that there are very grave objections to the ground being taken for the purpose specified. I have received a memorial signed by upwards of a thousand of the most respectable and influential natives resident at Budgepore, praying that the spot in question may not be given up to Government for the erection of barracks, as it is the site of a shrine of great sanctity held in much veneration by the people. The erection of the barracks there would be incompatible with the maintenance of the shrine in its present site, and the removal of the latter would cause a great deal of dissatisfaction among the natives, and I shall feel it my duty to remonstrate strongly against it.

The other site to the south of the city, equally eligible for the required purpose, will be much

more easily available, and I should recommend the Committee to settle upon that as the site for the proposed barracks.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JUMMA WASILBAKEE,
Commissioner.

There was some more correspondence on the subject, all of which went up to the Lieutenant-Governor, who endorsed Mr. Wasilbakee's views. The Governor-General, without reading the papers, endorsed Mr. Byewilwuffa's views, and the barracks were ordered to be erected on the south side of the city, much to the satisfaction of the Brigadier, who told every body how he had disagreed with the other members of the Committee, how the correspondence had gone up to the Governor-General, who had acted upon his, Brigadier Haversack's, opinion and recommendation.

Tenders for contracts for bricks and building materials were then called for, and the 15th of May was the day fixed upon which the sealed tenders were to be opened. The advertisement calling for these tenders was published in the *Mofussilite*, which none of the people likely to contract, that is to say the rich natives of Budgepore, ever saw. But the matter got

mooted abroad, and five men offered. I have their names before me, but I shall be better understood if I call them contractor No. 1, contractor No. 2, and so on up to No. 5.

Contractor No. 5 offered to furnish the bricks at three rupees a thousand, No. 4 at three rupees four annas, No. 3 at three rupees twelve annas, No. 2 at four rupees, and No. 1 at five rupees. Of these, Nos. 2, 3, and 4 failed to furnish the required security. No. 1 was a rich man, a nephew of Shekh Futtoo, who very easily persuaded No. 5 to withdraw, promising to give him the sub-contract for the whole at thirty-five per cent. more than the rate he had tendered for. The agreement between them was drawn out and signed. No. 5 withdrew, No. 1 was accepted, and his tender went on to the Superintending Engineer for confirmation.

On the evening of the same day that the contract was accepted by Lieutenant Stuart, Doolchund, his head writer, received from Contractor No. 1 four bags containing two thousand five hundred rupees each, for which he gave the following receipt.

“Received on account of Captain James Stuart from Noor Khan, contractor, ten thousand rupees.

(Signed) DOOLCHUND,
Head Writer,
Engineer's Office.

"Who has been with you all this time ; dinner is quite cold ,," said Mrs. Stuart to her husband, as he came in to dinner on the evening the tender was disposed of.

"Doolchund has been with me about these contracts. I am sorry I have kept you waiting. An excellent man that Doolchund is ; I am very fortunate to get him just as I was setting up my new office here."

"Who recommended him ?"

"Old Shekh Futtoo, Sirdar Bahadoor, the Commissioner's Serishtadar, brought him to me."

"I don't like the look of the man," said his wife.

After which they sat down to dinner and discussed other topics.

END OF VOL. I.



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on 15 October, 2018

